

Creating a Gender Sensitive Institution

Unconscious Bias

SESSION INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Dr. Jemimah Bailey, and I am a Visiting Research Fellow in the Trinity Centre for Gender Equality and Leadership. Welcome to this session entitled 'Unconscious Bias', which is aimed at those interested in developing a Gender Equality Plan to support the development of gender-sensitive institutions in higher education.

We are all biased. Our experiences shape us, and our experiences, beliefs, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, and other factors influence the lens through which we view the world. This can impact every aspect of our lives, both personal and professional.

Unconscious bias (sometimes called 'implicit bias' or 'unintended bias') is an expression of our unintentional people preferences. It is automatically activated and affects how we think, day to day, and how we make regular decisions. However, just because we have these automatic biases, this does not mean we should accept them and allow them to influence our behaviour.

This session will support you to recognise and acknowledge your own biases so that you can identify them when making decisions and prevent yourself from making judgements based on a biased viewpoint. It will help you to recognise the negative effects of bias, particularly where it relates to gender, as well as the benefits to be realised by uncovering bias in decision-making processes. Finally, this session will introduce and describe strategies for overcoming personal and organisational bias.

So, on completion of this session, you should be able to:

- Outline the benefits of equal gender participation in the workforce
- Explain how unconscious biases are created
- Describe the impact of unconscious bias
- Analyse examples of unconscious bias
- Utilise strategies to manage and mitigate bias

There are a several tasks for you to undertake in line with this topic. Completing these tasks will help you achieve the learning outcomes I just listed in addition to developing an in-depth appreciation for the topic of unconscious bias as it relates to gender inequality.