

Gender-sensitive Parliaments

Domain 3 – Recruitment of parliamentary employees

This domain assesses the extent to which the procedures for recruitment of parliamentary staff are gender-sensitive.

A gender-sensitive parliament is one where women and men have equal opportunities to become parliamentary employees.

Gender-sensitive parliaments recruit employees based on merit and expertise, assessed through appropriate tests and interviews. Actions that promote gender balance in staffing should be taken throughout the candidate selection process. It is essential that selection criteria and tests are not discriminatory and are based on the analysis of required professional profiles. Special attention should be paid to the use of gender-sensitive language in selection tests or interviews (during the situation and in the materials), as well as test timing and duration (e.g. women with babies or young children may be discouraged from taking part in long procedures) (IPU: 2011).

Recruitment boards should be similarly gender-balanced. In case of compulsory open competitions, it is important that the examination board is composed of at least one-third of each sex. It is also useful to monitor calls for proposals and recruitment procedures, with respect to their topics and language.

Special measures for choosing candidates can be implemented, for instance giving preference to under-represented groups where competence profiles and skills are equivalent (IPU: 2011). These serve to promote women's access to parliamentary departments.