

# Equality and Inclusion are Practices, not End Goals

Dr Gemma Irvine

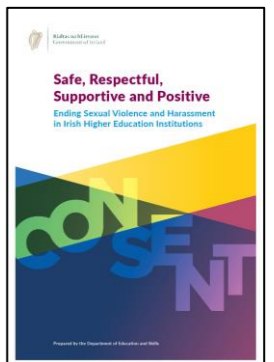
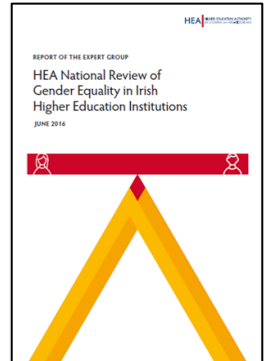
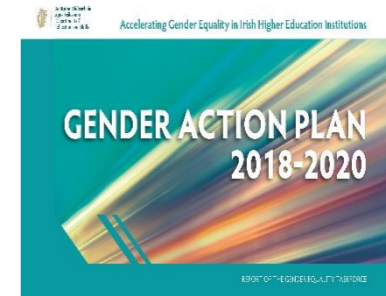
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Irvine, G (2020) 'Equality and inclusion are practices, not end goals' *Ireland's Yearbook of Education 2019 – 2020*.  
<https://educationmatters.ie/irelands-yearbook-of-education-2019-2020/higher-education/equality-and-inclusion-are-practices-not-end-goals/>



# Ireland's approach to EDI

- Started with focus on gender equality (GE):
  - 2015 – HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIs
  - 2017 – Gender Equality Taskforce
- Continued with focus on Consent – Framework for Consent in HEIs (2019)
- Establishment of National Intersectionality Working Group



# Lessons from the approach to GE

- Common terminology
- Data and analysis:
  - Career progression pipeline by gender
  - Governance & Management structures
  - Stakeholder consultation
  - Public online survey
  - Current practice vs Good practice
- Monitoring/modelling rate of change
- Developing a National Action Plan with time-bound targets and goals

# Organisational and Cultural Change

- Systematic barriers in HEI organisation and culture mean that *talent alone is not always enough to guarantee success*
- The reason that women are not found in the most senior positions in the same proportion as men is...
  - that women face barriers to progression which are not experienced to the same degree by their male colleagues*

# What's really going on?

Judging excellence: e.g. bibliometrics: are they gender-neutral?

- Wenneras and Wold landmark *NATURE* study ‘*Women really do have to be at least twice as good as men to succeed*’
- Favour sciences in which women are traditionally under-represented: discipline not gender
- Numbers of papers published is a time-bound metric that disadvantages anyone who has taken time out from an academic career
- As first authors, women receive fewer citations than men
- Women tend to publish more multi-author papers
- Men get greater credit for multi-author publications than women

Other metrics: grant €; amount of space; workload allocation – share of T&L, service roles; Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: Double-blind experiment only changing the name on CV

# Confidence in the system

## Myth: Ambition – we need to fix the women

“Blame is attached to women’s lack of career planning, low self-esteem, lack of career ambition, poor political skills, poor ability to market themselves and lifestyle choices”

Source: Pat O’Connor(2014) Management and Gender in Higher Education

## Research: Fix the environment

Women are as ambitious as men to reach the top within their organisations, but women are significantly less confident than men that they would succeed. Note: Confidence was defined “as a perception of one’s chances of success **in the current environment**, rather than confidence in one’s own qualifications”

Source: McKinsey & Company, 2017

# Leading by Example

- Culture is led from the top
- Expert Group recommendations directed at the Presidents, VP EDI, Deans, HoD and further endorsed and built on by Taskforce Actions
- Senior appointments required to demonstrate leadership in gender equality
- Every HEI required to have an institutional Gender Action Plan and to report their progress annually to the HEA
- **Core grant funding is at risk if progress is not made – HEA Strategic Dialogue Process**

# Role of Research Funders

- Three largest research funding agencies in Ireland (SFI, IRC, HRB) have fully embraced the Expert Group recommendations and Taskforce Actions
- All have organisational Gender Action Policies/Plans
- Publish their data by gender and require assessors to do bias awareness training
- Require consideration of the gender dimension in research content (see *Gendered Innovations*)
- **Have linked eligibility to Athena SWAN institutional certification**



# Athena SWAN



- Introduced into Ireland in 2015 and subsequently in Australia, USA and Canada
- HEIs and departments are advised to take at least one year to prepare application
- Comprehensive, critical, self-assessment, honest, evidence-based reflection on the results, and identification of time-bound actions or targets to address any issues highlighted
- **Tailored approach to organisational and cultural change championed by the institution**

# Vision:

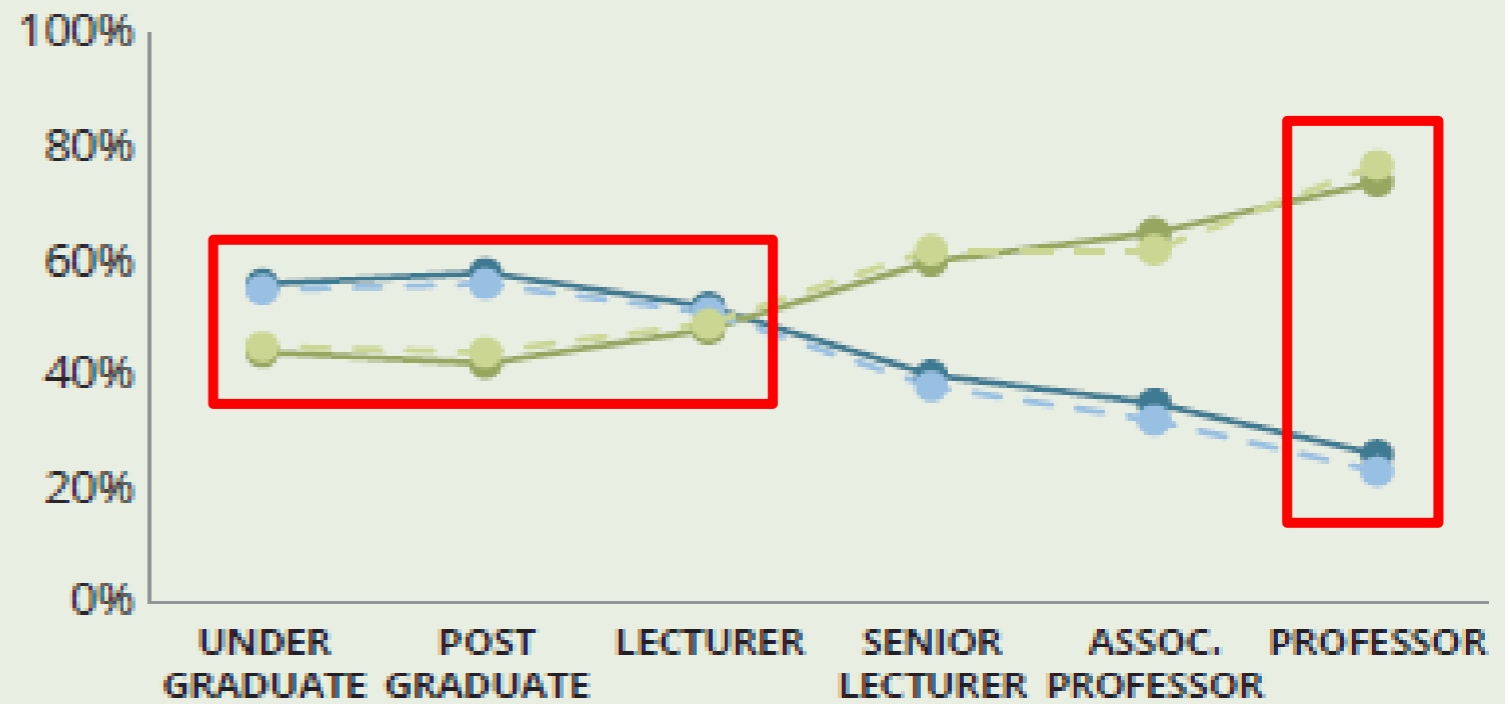
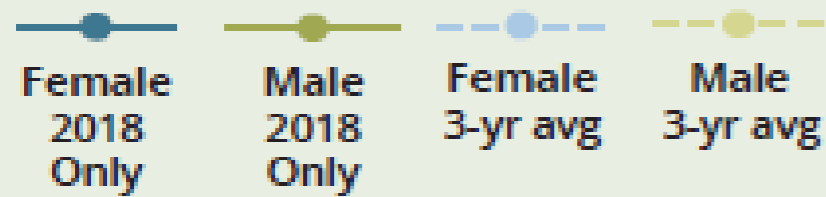
**By 2026 Ireland will be a  
world-leading country for  
Gender Equality in Higher  
Education**

# How are we doing?

- European Commission (2019) SHE Figures for 2018 report that women lead only 22% of Europe's HEIs and hold only 24% of Professor A posts
- Ireland identified as the fastest riser from 2005 to 2017 among EU states (now placed 7<sup>th</sup>, *Gender Equality Index, 2019*)
- But... we've never had a female President of a University, and only 26% of our Professors in 2018 were female
- And...Ireland's Glass Ceiling Index continues to be higher (2.16) than EU level of 1.64

## Academic Core-funded Staff by Grade

(2018 vs 3-year average, 2015-2017)



Source: HEA Key Facts & Figures Higher Education Data by Gender (2019)

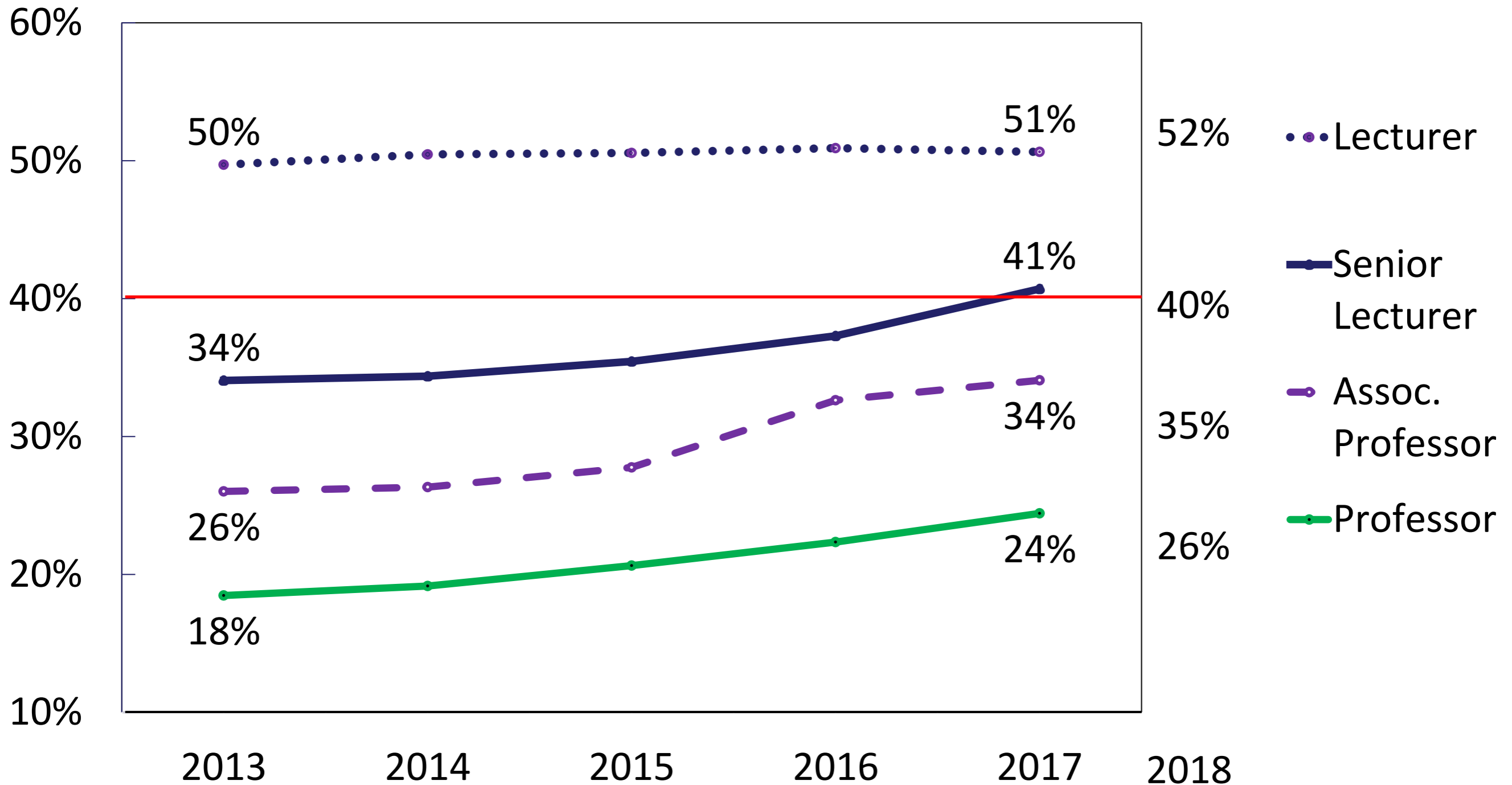
## Professional, Management and Support Core-funded Staff by Pay Grade

(2018 vs 3-year average, 2015-2017)

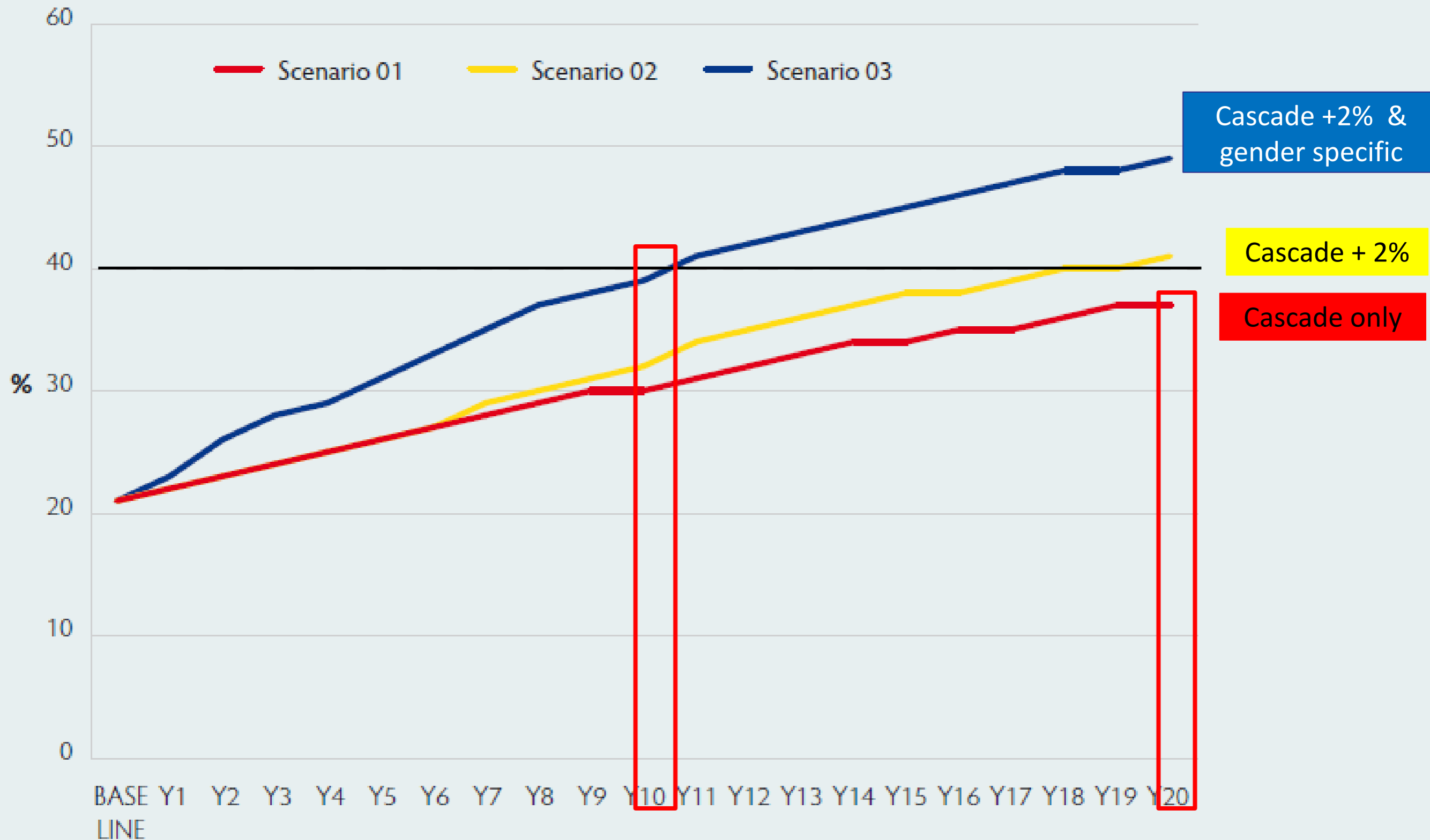


# Change over time

## Universities - % female academic staff



# Estimated rate of future change



Source: Gender-Equality-Taskforce-Action-Plan-2018-2020

# Targeted Positive Action

- Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality established in the HEA
  - Centralised support for the institutions, sharing of good practice, and funding for innovative organisational and cultural change initiatives nationally
- Senior Academic Leadership (SAL) Initiative launched in 2019
  - Compliments wider organisational & cultural initiatives
  - Targeted positive initiative at top end of career pipeline
  - 45 new & additional posts over 3 years
  - Same high standard required of applicants as any other Professor or Senior Lecturer level 3 post
  - To be funded in areas where there is a clear under-representation of senior women
  - Based on similar initiatives in the Netherlands and Germany

# EDI is everyone's responsibility

- A collaborative national approach is needed so that everyone can be empowered to engage, embrace diversity, and adopt equal and inclusive practices...  
*it can't be left only to the people experiencing EDI issues – it is everyone's responsibility*
- Recognising one's biases, unfortunately, does not make them go away...  
*equality and inclusion should therefore be considered practices, not end goals*



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# Thank you

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