

WISC Terms of Reference [1]

Our Mission - Who We Are

WISC (Women In Supramolecular Chemistry) is an international network creating a sense of kinship and providing support for women. In doing so, we aim to support the retention and career progression of women of all career stages within our community, but primarily focusing at post-graduate levels and beyond.

WISC uses an inclusive definition of women from the Women in Academia Support Network (with permission).[2]

This inclusive definition of 'women', as used by Ada Camp, welcomes 'trans women, genderqueer women, and non-binary people who are significantly female-identified' (quoted in Geek Feminism, 2014).

WISC believes that everyone should be included and welcomed in conversations about equality, diversity, and inclusion, because building a fairer system benefits everyone. Our training workshops and events are open to participants of any gender or career stage and all are welcome to access our online resources. Thus, we harness the calling in over the calling out approach (as defined in Chemistry World).[3]

We recognise that any discussion about gender in science is, and has to be, intersectional. Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the theory of *intersectionality*, the idea that when it comes to thinking about how inequalities persist, categories like gender, race, and class are best understood as overlapping and mutually constitutive rather than isolated and distinct [4]

Our mission and values reflect the kind of community we want to build and be part of.

[1] We are very grateful for and acknowledge the support of #WIASN and NADSN for allowing us to adapt these terms of reference from those they have developed

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/groups/905644729576673/about>; @wiasnofficial

[3] <https://www.chemistryworld.com/opinion/supramolecular-community-calls-in-support-for-gender-equity/4013248.article>

[4] <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality>

Our Aims and Objectives

We aim to work with the community for the community in order to:

- Promote the retention and progression of women and other marginalised groups in supramolecular chemistry, with a focus on post-graduate levels and above

- Promote the interests of women and other marginalised groups in supramolecular chemistry
- Organise and deliver accessible events to the community and its allies
- Base our decision making on what we have learnt from the community, through engagement, surveys and other research
- Support and undertake relevant research projects, contribute to policies and guidance for staff, managers, higher education institutions (HEIs), further education institutions (FEIs), funders and Government agencies
- Undertake original, ethically approved research in support of the national and international community
- Publish our findings in order to raise awareness of the experiences of and challenges faced by women and other marginalised groups in supramolecular chemistry
- Provide opportunities for the personal and professional development of women in supramolecular chemistry
- Create and maintain an internet site with information, resources, documents, blogs, and useful links
- Attract sponsors and hosts for conferences and special-interest meetings open to all
- To provide the WISC framework and associated materials as a support to other like-minded organisations
- To align ourselves with like-minded organisations, as appropriate

Our Structure and Mode of Operation.

- WISC has a Chair, Vice Chairs and a core leadership team drawn from the membership to be known as the Board
- WISC has a wider Advisory Board that includes representatives from academic, post-doctoral, and post-graduate student communities. The Advisory Board agree and oversee the WISC strategy/goals and receive regular progress reports from the Board
- The Chair and Vice Chairs will have responsibility for taking forward pieces of work agreed from the overarching themes of work in WISC
- Core Leadership Team roles will include: Chair, Treasurer, Events, Communications, Organisation, HE Policy, Research, Mentoring, Community Support Clusters and other roles to be agreed by the Board
- WISC members can be co-opted into working groups based on their expertise and experience
- WISC will create and support Community Clusters to support those within the community who are further marginalised

Administration.

- The Board will meet virtually a minimum of ten times per year at average 4-6 week intervals
- A quorum of the Board will be formed with the attendance of four members at meetings
- Meeting papers will be circulated to the Board, and notes made available to the Board after every meeting

- For any WISC activity or change to an existing WISC activity to gain approval, that activity must be agreed by the Chair and a minimum of three other WISC Board members
- Any complaints or issues raised to WISC will be discussed at the next WISC board meeting, and any response will be agreed by quorum consensus

Safe Space

We want WISC to be a SAFE SPACE. What do we mean? Racism, ageism, homophobia, sexism, transphobia, ableism or prejudice based on ethnicity, disability, nationality, class, gender, gender presentation, language ability, asylum status or religious affiliation will not be tolerated.

We also understand that those of us benefiting from privilege may have unconscious biases, which we may express without understanding their contribution to oppression and microaggression. This means we have a wider understanding of safe space: as in a place in which all of us are safe to make a mistake without being shamed or attacked, for instance if we use wrong terminology reflecting an unconscious bias or a lack of understanding. We therefore encourage 'calling in' (as previously defined), so that we can use these occasions as learning opportunities. We recognise that the 'heavy lifting' is not the responsibility of those who are oppressed, and all of us, and perhaps particularly the privileged, have a responsibility to 'call in' group members where we see oppression expressed or perpetuated through their words; we encourage group members to do this. On occasion, this will include difficult conversations around privilege. We urge members to remain engaged with learning and not to admonish those who are learning, nor those who are sharing their experience in order to help others learn; to accept that when/if challenged we will reflect rather than be offended; and that we are willing to accept that we may need to make changes in our language/tone/vocabulary, and not become defensive or rude if offence is pointed out.

Ultimately though, freedom of speech, and our wish to learn and encourage learning, does not extend to the oppression or triggering of others.