

## 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, Events, Communications, Organisation, HE Policy, Research, Mentoring, Community Support Clusters and other roles to be agreed by the Board.
- The WISC treasurer is not considered a Core Leadership Role at present however, this is subject to change upon WISC board agreement.
- 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
- WISC Social media profiles should not be used for self-promotion of board and advisory members beyond what would be afforded to any other member of the community.
- The WISC Vice-Chairs of communication alongside the WISC Chair should retain control of the WISC social media profiles.
- WISC supports but does not have a controlling influence in other public engagement activities to include: SupraLab and EFeMS.

- Each position on the WISC Board will last for 3 years, at this point board members can express their interest to stay on the board, retaining their current position for another 3-years, or to move to a different position within the Board.
- There will be a maximum of 6 years that any one person can be a WISC board member, unless no replacement member can be found.
- The WISC Chair position will be a fixed term of 3 years, after which time the current Chair will move to the Advisory Board for a further 3 years to support ongoing WISC activities should they wish to do so.
- Advisory Board members will hold their position for an initial three year period. If the Advisory board members have ceased their support of WISC activities for a period of 18 months, they will be removed from the Advisory Board without further consultation, upon approval from the WISC Board.
- Participation on the WISC Advisory Board has no time limit.
- Any project that wants to associate itself WISC should gain board approval, a list of potential co-authors for this work should presented at the time, although the is subject to change based on the progress of the project.
- The treasurer role may continue for a period of time > 6 years in total as this role has no current feedin to WISC activities, should this change the treasurer role will be considered on an equal footing with other Board member roles (excluding that of the Chair).

#### 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 a minimum of 51% of board 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 51 % of the 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
- The core activities will be agreed by the WISC board 1 year in advance.
- After an initial three-year period a board member will be given the opportunity to continue for a further three years, unless they are the WISC Chair. Should a position become vacant, then an individual can self-nominate for that position through email, to the current Chair, within a timeframe  $\leq$  4-weeks and will be initially sourced from current board members. If a no nominations are received for a position and that position remains vacant then the current serving member will be asked to continue in that role until a replacement member can be found. This may include sourcing individuals for outside the current board, through advertisement on social media or through our website.

- If there is only one individual who self-nominates for this position then this individual will be awarded the position unless >50 % of the WISC board do not support this individual's position.
- If there is more than 1 individual who self-nominates for a position then an anonymous vote will be held, and the candidate who obtains a majority will be awarded the position.
- The Board retains the right to reallocate any WISC positions in accordance with current WISC commitments and workload pressures that may be placed onto an individual.
- Only an active Supramolecular Chemist may hold the role of Chair within WISC.
- Individual WISC members will be acknowledged for their role in any group project or funding applications or publications as would be expected to appropriate for any academic research programme. This may change should WISC gain the ability to hold grants and employ individuals independently.

### 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.