

Develop your position on the topic of gender inequality in universities

Worksheet

Use this worksheet in conjunction with the [Google Slides](#). Download the worksheet to your device and complete it offline as you work through the slides.

This activity requires you to find out about the topic of gender inequality in universities and develop your position (i.e. your informed view) on the topic. Developing a position, or argument, is an essential part of the research and discursive writing process.

Slide 4 – Developing an argument (your position on a topic)

1. Watch [the video](#) (7 minutes) about the four key components of an argument, and add a piece of information to each of them:

- Proposition statement – the claim you are making.
- Supporting statement – the evidence that supports your claim.
- Opposition statement – the counterargument.
- Concluding statement – bringing components of the argument together.

2. Access the link and read this short text (2-minute read) about [Using evidence to support your argument](#). Read to identify the main ideas and when you have finished write 3 or 4 sentences that summarise what you recall (scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'download the PDF' if you would like a copy).

Slide 5 - A lack of parity

1. For each of the 4 areas in which there is a lack of parity between men and women, decide if it is likely to be a feature of a leadership gap, a salary gap, or a funding gap:

1. Promotions ([Bonawitz & Andel, 2009](#))
2. Citation of their work ([Knobloch-Westerwick, Glynn & Huges, 2013](#) and [Wu, 2024](#)).
3. Funding of their proposals ([van der Lee & Ellemers, 2015](#))

4. Recognition of their teaching ([Centra and Gaubatz, 2000](#) and [Boring, 2017](#))

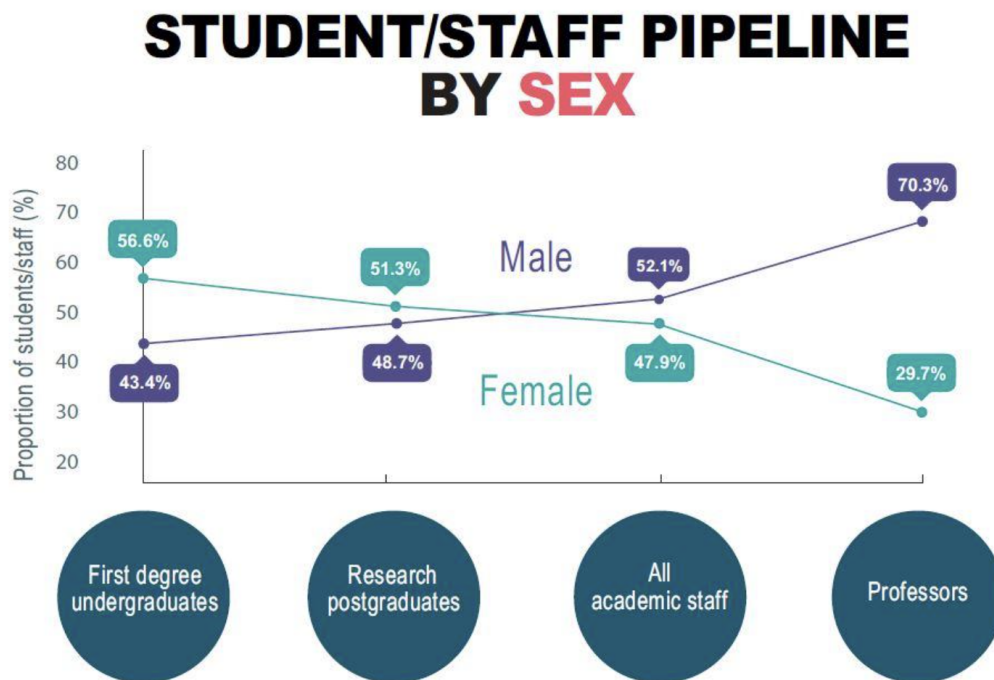
2. Choose one of the four areas. Access the link and read the abstract (the summary at the beginning of an academic paper). Write one sentence that summarises the main point of the paper.

Slide 6 - By 2023 had the situation improved?

Write a personal response to the information on slide 6.

- Are you surprised?
- Do you think it is the same in your local context?
- Can you explain this gender inequality?
- Is it fair? Does it matter?

Slide 7 - Data analysis



All student and all academic staff proportions by sex, 2021/22

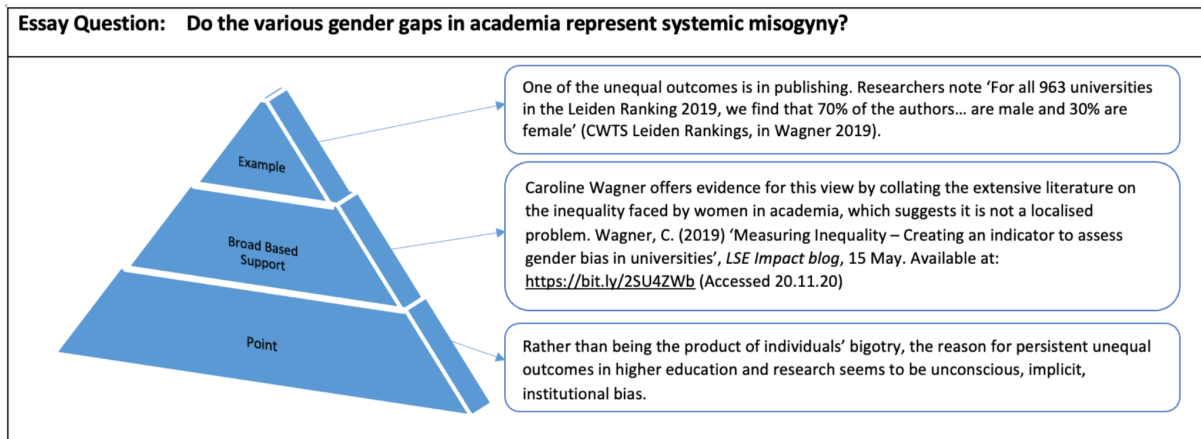
The vertical axis tells us about the percentage in 2021-2022 of students or staff in the 4 categories on the horizontal axis.

1. Compare the percentage of female students who begin university as undergraduates to the percentage of males who begin university as undergraduates.
2. Compare the percentage of female students who complete postgraduate research degrees to the percentage of males who complete postgraduate research degrees.
3. Compare the percentage of female academic staff to the percentage of male academic staff.
4. Compare the percentage of female professors to the percentage of male professors.

What can you say about the trend shown in the graph?

Slide 10 – The Pyramid Approach to Research

The graphic visualises the research and planning process that a student is doing for an essay entitled: **‘Do the various gender gaps in academia represent systemic misogyny?’**



- The writer begins with her main point (the bottom level of the pyramid), showing that her answer to the essay question is 'yes', and specifically that the gender gaps in higher education seem to be due to institutional bias.
- The broad-based support for this opinion (the middle level of the pyramid) comes from one of the academic sources that she found during the research process (Wagner, 2019).
- The example she gives (the top level of the pyramid) is a quote, including data, that she found in Wagner, 2019.

Providing support for your opinion using evidence from a secondary source is an essential part of the writing process. Not using a source damages the credibility of your work (this is known as making an unsubstantiated claim).

Students often omit the central part of the process and support a point only with an example. Taking the opportunity to analyse the source using critical thinking (the middle level of the pyramid) and showing how it supports your own argument is an important building block in the process of argumentation. This part of the process allows you to add your own voice to the research conversation.

Slide 11 - A two-minute presentation

[Access the link and listen to the video:](#)

As you listen make notes about:

- Background to the topic
- Sue's position/argument
- Possible explanation for the lack of parity
- Summary of the arguments made by the authors of two academic sources that support her opinion ([Boring, et al., 2017](#), and [MacNell, et al., 2014](#))

Slides 12 & 13 - Choose a topic

1. Choose one of the topics on slide 12 and read the research that is linked to on the slide.
2. Use the 'Pyramid' grid below to add a point plus supporting source information that will help Sue build her argument about institutional bias in universities.

Example:
Broad-based support:
Point:

3. Use Sue's presentation as an example and create your own two-minute presentation based on the 'pyramid' task you have just completed.

Develop your discursive writing

If you'd like to find out more about argumentation, and practice writing a discursive essay, visit the [Academic Writing Guide](#). The Social Sciences version of the Academic Writing Guide deals with the topic of unequal power relations.