

Mitigating Bias & Creating Balance in Performance Evaluations

Diversity & Inclusion @ SLAC

How bias affects performance evaluations

A recent study of 200+ performance reviews found significant differences in feedback by gender.

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|--------------|---|---|---|
| Men | 2x more references to their technical expertise and their vision | 7x more manager feedback on communication style being “too soft” | 3x more feedback related to business outcomes |
| Women | 2x more references to their communal or nurturing style (e.g. “helpful” or “dedicated.”) | 2.5x more manager feedback on communication style being “too aggressive” | 2.5x more references to team accomplishments, as opposed to individual ones. |

(2016) Stanford Clayman Institute for Gender Research

These findings also reflect common biases when evaluating people from other underrepresented minority groups. See [SLAC’s Bias Mitigating Reference Guide](#).

How to mitigate bias to balance performance evaluations

Clarify BEFORE writing your evaluation

- What will be accomplished is clearly defined and has been discussed with the employee (goals)
- How work will be accomplished is clearly defined and has been discussed with the employee (competencies)

Consider DURING writing your evaluation

- Be mindful of all diverse characteristics (race, age, gender, etc.) and how they may work for FOR and AGAINST employees
- Is a true “equitable bar” of achievement being applied for all employees?

Check AFTER writing your evaluation

- No references were made to personality, style or personal circumstances
- Review is focused on accomplishments and competencies
- Contribution descriptions reflect a balanced use of relationship/individual language. See [SLAC’s Bias Mitigating Reference Guide](#) for more information.
- Feedback is actionable / directly linked to relevant outcomes
- Success criteria are evenly applied across all employees

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Primary Sources:

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