

Royal Historical Society Report on *Gender Equality and Historians in UK Higher Education* finds conditions that ‘smack of the 1970s’



For International Women’s Day on 8 March it is worth reflecting on the persistence of barriers to gender equality in Higher Education. Policies against discrimination have been in place for two or three decades in some (although by no means all) universities. But despite this, a marked inequality remains. The bias may be less visible nowadays, but it is no less real for that.

Although more women study history at school and at undergraduate level, **it is salutary to note that only 20.8% of History Professors are women, which means that we are scarcely doing any better than the City, where 19.5% of senior roles are held by women.**

A new Report on Gender Equality by the Royal Historical Society represents, in the words of Dame Jinty Nelson, former President of the RHS, “an urgent summons” to action. Well-intentioned policies are not enough: they must be fully implemented, and universities need to confront “invisible, or unconscious, bias”, “stereotype threat” and “the silencing of women”.

The Report is based on a survey of 700 historians across the UK and takes a **positive, optimistic approach** to the problem of gender inequality. It calls for a series of practical reforms within history departments and universities. As such, the Report is already attracting considerable interest in the sector.

As Higher Education moves once again to the centre stage of political debate it faces many challenges: equality is surely one of the most pressing.

Press contacts: Professor Nicola Miller, UCL (nicola.miller@ucl.ac.uk; 020 7226 1019)
Dr Jane Gerson, Research & Communications, RHS (j.gerson@royalhistsoc.org)

Full Report: <http://royalhistsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/RHSGenderEqualityReport-Jan-15.pdf>