DFG Emphasises Importance of Sex, Gender and Diversity to Research Projects

Statement of the Senate and website providing information for all scientific disciplines / President Katja Becker: “Reflecting on these dimensions is crucial to the quality of research”

Taking sex, gender and diversity into account in the preparation and implementation of a research project helps to eliminate blind spots and thus increase the scientific quality of the results. For instance, research into the risks of osteoporosis in men has long been neglected, however, it is now known that around one-third of men are affected and require effective treatment. Furthermore, crash test dummies, modelled on both male and female bodies, illustrate individual injury risks for each sex and help to prevent them. In a statement, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) stressed the importance of taking sex, gender and diversity into account in research projects. In doing so, it is adopting a leading role in the German research system.

“We believe it is important to encourage researchers to reflect on sex and gender dimensions and diversity dimensions in their research work, as they are relevant in many instances,” says DFG President Professor Dr. Katja Becker.

“However, we also understand that the relevance of sex, gender and diversity varies depending on the research context, subject area and methods, which is why this information need only be provided as it pertains to the proposed research.”

The DFG has set up a website providing information and examples from the different scientific disciplines (see the link below).

Among other things, the dimensions of sex and gender and diversity may, as described in the statement, be relevant with respect to the researchers, the persons studied, the individuals affected by implementation of the research results, the animals studied or the samples taken from human subjects or animals. Taking the importance of sex, gender and diversity into account in the preparation and implementation of research projects is part of good research practice and anchored in the DFG’s 2019 Code of Conduct Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice. Should sex and gender and diversity dimensions not be relevant to a project in terms of content or methodology, no details in this regard would have to be provided in the funding proposal.

Further Information

The statement “Sex, Gender and Diversity – Importance to Research Projects” and information and examples for all scientific disciplines are available at:
www.dfg.de/diversity.dimensions

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