

# GSIS DEI Promotion WG Newsletter

## No. 4



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### Introduction

As a selected "University of International Research Excellence," Tohoku University aims to be a global leader in research. Central to this vision is the advancement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). We believe that true innovation thrives in an environment where diverse talents gather, value each other's differences, and can perform at their best. Our Graduate School is dedicated to fostering a campus culture where all members are valued and respected—irrespective of their gender, nationality, or age.

### Unconscious Bias

As introduced in Issue No. 3, "unconscious bias" is a "pattern of thinking"—a mental shortcut the brain takes based on past experiences. Everyone possesses this bias. However, in research and educational settings, these patterns can unintentionally discourage others or limit their potential. In this issue, we delve deeper into this concept through concrete examples.

### Example 2

#### The Trap of "Good Intentions"

"Excluding someone from business trips or evening meetings because 'they are busy with childcare or caregiving,' without asking them first." This is called "benevolent discrimination." Though well-intended, it can deprive them of fair opportunities for experience and growth (Equity).

### Example 1

#### Stereotyping Roles Based on Attributes

Instinctively asking younger staff or women to handle support tasks, like note-taking or venue setup.  
Assuming men or senior faculty are inherently better suited for leadership roles.  
Additionally, regarding the women-only recruitment mentioned in Issue No. 2, some feedback expressed discomfort about "gender prioritized over ability." This reaction may stem from a hidden bias that "hiring women equals preferential treatment and lower quality."

### Steps We Can Take Starting Today

The most important step is to admit that "I have biases too." Ironically, those who believe "I am fair" often need the most caution. It is also key to avoid jumping to conclusions. Instead of assuming "it's probably impossible," ask the person directly: "Can you handle this task right now?" Finally, practicing "Slow Thinking" is effective. Take a breath before judging and ask yourself: "Is this just an assumption?"

### Conclusion

Unconscious bias is universal and difficult to eliminate completely. However, by acknowledging it and choosing dialogue over assumptions, we can transform our workplace atmosphere. Let's build a Graduate School of Information Sciences where everyone feels safe—step by step, through daily awareness and trust.

### Contact

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