

## SWIP UK GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY GROUPS

Many departments are starting Women in Philosophy (hereon 'WiP') groups, a development that SWIP UK wholeheartedly endorses. Sometimes these groups or departments have come to us for advice, so below we offer some thoughts about how to make these groups function well. These take the form of answers to commonly asked questions.

### ***1) Who should come to the WiP group?***

SWIP UK's recently adopted aims and objectives are relevant to this question. According to these, SWIP UK recognises that 'woman' is sometimes used to refer to those who identify as women and is also sometimes used to refer to those who are perceived/treated as women. We aim to represent members of both (overlapping) groups. We think this is a good way to think about WiP groups, and we'd urge departments to adopt this usage.

### ***2) What should the aims of a WiP group be?***

We think SWIP UK's aims are good ones for a WiP group, but there may be local aims that we haven't thought of at all. Here are some suggestions to add to your own:

- To raise departmental awareness of discrimination and marginalisation directed at women in philosophy, past and present. Importantly, this discrimination and marginalization directed at women is intersectional, meaning that it can be based on multiple aspects of identity and various combinations of these aspects. Relevant aspects of identity include (but are not limited to) age, race, ethnicity, caste, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, class, nationality, and religion.
- To end all forms of discrimination and marginalisation directed at women in philosophy.
- To support women in philosophy.
- To facilitate co-operation between women in philosophy.
- To collect information of interest to women in philosophy.
- To promote philosophy by women, past and present.
- To foster feminism in philosophy and philosophy in feminism.
- To collaborate, where appropriate, with individuals and organisations aiming to counter all forms of discrimination and marginalisation in philosophy.

### **3) What might a WiP group do?**

- Work to implement the BPA-SWIP Good Practice Scheme at the host institution, and to monitor the implementation.
- Work with other organisations, such as other WiP groups, SWIP UK, MAP, LGBTQ+ societies, BAME groups, international students groups, groups working on disability issues, etc.
- Hold philosophical events that promote and celebrate the work done by women in philosophy. These events should generally be open to all.
- Hold climate meetings to offer a safe and open space in which members can freely share any of their views, concerns, experiences, suggestions, feedback, and advice related to issues that women in philosophy might encounter, for example, regarding inappropriate conduct and various forms of discrimination.
- Organise a climate survey to be reviewed by the department and implement action accordingly.
- Set up a mechanism (such as an online form) for anonymous comments regarding Equality and Diversity issues to be passed on to the WiP group and other relevant post holders.
- Hold social events to promote networking and mentoring between women in philosophy and between various marginalised groups of philosophers.

### **4) How should a WiP climate meeting be run?**

The climate meetings may be organised in a number of ways. It has been our experience that it can be hard to predict what will emerge in gatherings like this: a planned fun social might turn out to be a place where concerns about sexual harassment are raised; or a planned discussion of serious issues could turn into a party. We urge departments to be receptive to what may develop when groups of women are brought together in a field in which they are underrepresented. Obviously certain limits of speech will apply -- hate speech should never be tolerated, for example -- but beyond this we strongly suggest flexibility and openness. Unfettered conversation among groups of women has historically been very important for understanding the issues that they face, so we urge departments to encourage this. Importantly, the meetings should be strictly confidential and minutes should not be taken. With consent, a member of the group may pass on information to an appropriate post holder (for example, the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' chairperson) within the host institution, and communicate any resulting action with the relevant parties in a timely fashion. The meetings should take place at a time and venue that allows for ease of access for as many members as possible. These meetings, we suggest, should be open only to self-identified women and those who are seen or treated as women, who are current or former students or members of staff that work in Philosophy at the host institution.