**Representation of women at each stage of the staff selection process in the United Nations system, from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2011**

Data on vacancies helps illustrate the journey of potential female candidates from application through to selection. By comparing the representation of women at each stage of the selection process, it is possible to identify where obstacles may exists and identify intervention points for actions such as special measures.

Twenty entities provided data on vacancies. Across all contracts and locations, a total of 4,806 vacancies were announced at the P-1 to UG levels in 2010 and 2011 and 527,447 applications were submitted, of which 38.1 per cent were submitted by women. Women are underrepresented at every stage of the application process, but a greater proportion of women are selected (43.1 per cent) compared to the proportion that apply (38.1 per cent). Notably, a smaller proportion of female applications are forwarded to the hiring manager (33.8 per cent) compared to the proportion that apply, and a smaller proportion of female applicants are recommended (40.2 per cent) compared with the proportion that are interviewed (42 per cent). This implies that one obstacle is a lack of qualified female *applicants*, as confirmed by the 20 entities who identified this as a major impediment to progress on gender parity, and indicates that more work needs to be done to encourage applications from qualified women.

**Staff selection by level**

The proportion of female applications that are forwarded to the hiring manager serves as a good proxy for the proportion of *qualified* female applicants, since they will only be forwarded in cases where they fulfill the criteria. At every level except UG, a larger proportion of applications are submitted by women than are forwarded to the hiring manager (Figure 10.1). This means that the group of perceived *qualified* female applicants is proportionally smaller than the overall group of female applicants, while the opposite is true for men.

However, a greater proportion of female applications are forwarded to the hiring manager at the P-5 level (32 per cent) compared to the P-4 level (30.9 per cent), and a similar trend can be observed at the UG (34.1 per cent) and D-2 levels (22.6 per cent). The fact that the proportion of female applications forwarded to the hiring manager is not inversely proportional to seniority, suggests that the problem is not only a lack of qualified female applicants. Additionally, despite the fact that proportionally more female applications are forwarded to the hiring manager at the P-5 level, significantly fewer women are actually selected at this level (29.3 per cent) compared to the P-4 level (46 per cent). This implies that the obstacles to gender parity will not be overcome simply by increasing the proportion of qualified female applicants.

At every level except UG, the proportion of women shortlisted for interview is greater than the proportion of female applications forwarded to the hiring manager. This is a positive trend that must be sustained. However, the difference is significantly smaller at the higher levels (P-5 to D-2[[1]](#footnote-1)), compared to the lower levels (P-1 to P-4)[[2]](#footnote-2). The impact is that proportionally fewer qualified female candidates are selected for interview at the higher levels (34.7 per cent) where progress is most needed, compared to the lower levels (44.7 per cent) where parity has already been achieved at some levels. This is particularly concerning at the P-5 level where the difference is smallest (3.9 per cent), and suggests that the relatively higher proportion of qualified female candidates at this level is somewhat undermined by the short-listing process.

At every level except P-1, the proportion of women selected is greater than the proportion of women on the list of recommended candidates. This is an extremely positive trend and suggests that final selection authority is, to some extent, informed by the mandated goal of gender parity. However, aggregated data for the higher levels (P-5 to D-2) shows that the proportion of women selected (29.8 per cent) is in fact lower than the proportion of women recommended (34.3 per cent). This is a particular concern and suggests that special measures may be required to guarantee the selection of equally or better qualified women at these levels.

Figure 10.1

**Percentage of women at each stage of the staff selection processa at all levels of the United Nations system, on all contract types and at all locations, from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2011b**

*Sources:* United Nations entities.

a Twenty entities provided data on proportion of female applications, 12 on proportion forwarded to hiring managers, 13 on proportion shortlisted for interview, 14 on proportion recommended, and 16 on the proportion of women selected.

b Prepared on the basis of data submitted by 20 United Nations entities.

1. UG is not included here because overall numbers are small and data is therefore subject to greater fluctuations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There is a 3.8 per cent difference at the higher levels compared to 10.1 per cent at the lower levels. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)