

# WORAN (Women in OR and Analytics Network) Panel

## Gender imbalance: what can be done?

This year sees the third in our joint IMA/ORS 'Maths of OR' conferences. This is an extremely successful conference by most measures: full of high quality papers, as many contributors as we could squeeze in, exciting plenary speakers. The quality of content and interactions mean that it is expected to bring personal and professional development benefits to all participants.

Occasions like this conference, that make the community visible to each other, also make visible a striking gender imbalance. We know that the places of employment - particularly university departments - from which we draw our presenters, are male-dominated (for example, only around a quarter of academic mathematicians are female). We are pleased to say that our platform of invited speakers does not mirror this imbalance, with 40% female. By contrast, in the parallel sessions, substantially fewer than 25% are female. Does this reflect the actual imbalance in those working in the intersect between maths and OR? Is it chance? Is it due to Covid or other external issues? Or are women mathematicians systematically reaping fewer of the benefits of conference attendance?

At this round table session, conference organisers and diversity champions from both societies will say a few words about the issues, and actions to address them (now and in the future), and then open up to the audience: what do you think are the issues to be addressed? do you think we should be doing different things, or doing things differently? and what do you suggest needs to be done, by whom?

These questions are important to everybody in the maths and OR community because they impact on all of us, as colleagues, learners, and teachers. Please join us to discuss them, and help make future conferences more diverse.