

# How to promote gender equality in interdisciplinary marine research institutions?



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*Shellock et al (2022)*  
English version

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## Key points

- Gender equality is a fundamental human right and is important for tackling the issues facing our oceans.
- Women are less likely than men to be in positions of leadership in interdisciplinary marine research.
- Being an interdisciplinary researcher presents unique and additional challenges to women leaders.
- Leaders also experience challenges due to being a woman (e.g. isolation and underrepresentation, parenthood and caring responsibilities and stereotyping).
- Together these challenges form the “glass obstacle course”, which refers to all the hurdles and gendered processes at work, which affect women scientists.
- These barriers affect their day-to-day role, mental wellbeing, job satisfaction, success, and career progression.
- We provide a list of concrete, ambitious and actionable strategies that can help to promote gender equality in interdisciplinary marine research.

## Summary

Interdisciplinary research is paramount to addressing ocean sustainability challenges in the 21st century. However, women leaders have been underrepresented in interdisciplinary marine research, and there is little guidance on how to achieve the conditions that will lead to an increased proportion of women scientists in positions of leadership. Here, we conduct in-depth qualitative research to explore the main barriers and enablers to women’s leadership in an academic interdisciplinary marine research context. We found that interdisciplinarity can present unique and additional barriers to women leaders (e.g., the complexity and lack of value attributed interdisciplinary research) and are exacerbated by existing gender-specific issues that women experience (e.g., isolation and underrepresentation and stereotyping). Together these barriers overlap forming the “glass obstacle course”—and are particularly challenging for women in minoritized groups. Here, we provide a list of concrete, ambitious, and actionable enablers that can promote and support women’s leadership in academic interdisciplinary marine research (see Figure 1).

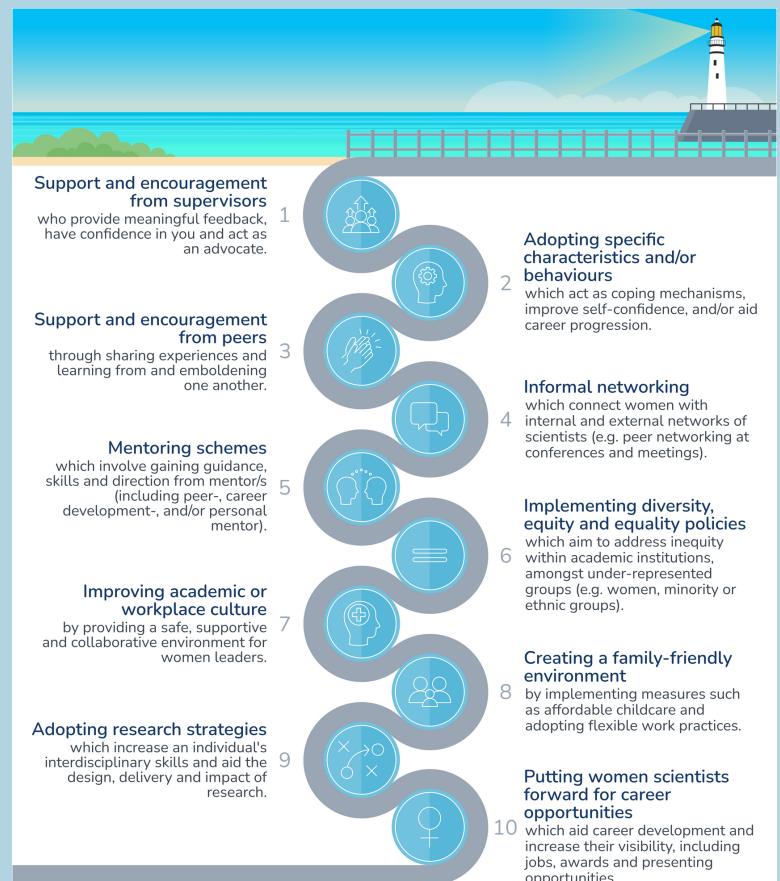


Figure 1: The ten most frequently discussed enablers of women’s leadership (© Shellock et al., 2022).

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