

2024

# PSAI GENDER AUDIT

**Political Studies Association of Ireland**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Gender Audit 2024

The aim of this Gender Audit is to provide an organisational assessment of the relative participation of women and men in the Political Studies Association of Ireland.

In 2015, the Executive Committee decided that a Gender Audit of the organisation would be carried out every three years and presented at the annual conference during the AGM. Since the 2015-2018 audit, it was agreed that the audit would take place on an annual basis, with the findings being made available on the Association's website to facilitate transparency and accountability on this issue.

Since 2019, the role of "Gender Mainstreaming Officer" is labelled "Equality and Diversity Officer" to encompass broader identities beyond gender. This includes, and is not limited to age, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexuality, ability and socioeconomic status. While this report focuses on the extent to which women are represented in the Association, the PSAI's Executive Committee recognises the importance to promote diversity and inclusion of all underrepresented groups.

Compared with the previous iterations, the 2024 Gender Audit includes additional data about the geographical location of the PSAI Executive Committee members and PSAI's funding awards.

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# METHODOLOGY

The audit uses data produced from the PSAI membership list provided to the Association by Taylor & Francis, the website of PSAI, the 2024 Annual Conference final programme, the 2024 Postgraduate Conference programme and Travel Funding Support Scheme applications. The report also uses data from the 2015-2018 Gender Audit of the PSAI carried out by Claire McGing (IADT) in her capacity as Gender Mainstreaming Officer for the Association, the 2019 and 2020 Gender Audits carried out by Lisa Keenan (TCD), the 2021 Gender Audit by Rachel Gregory and the 2022 and 2023 Gender Audits by Caroline Godard in their capacity of Equality and Diversity Officers. Comparative data were drawn from the 2023 ECPR Gender Study report and the 2022 IPSA Gender and Diversity Monitoring Report.

Some limitations underlined in the previous Gender Audit are reiterated here. The data sources available do not include any demographic data (i.e. on gender, group membership and disability status). Since the first audit was carried out in 2015, the gender audit authors have produced data by using the person's name and an online search to confirm the pronouns used. This method compels the researcher to make assumptions about a person's gender, conflates sex and gender and conveys gender and sex binary representations.

The author suggests that self-identification would be the preferred method to reflect the multiplicity of gender identities. This could only be achieved through changes in the data collection process during membership enrolment and conference registration. Finally, the lack of demographic data does not allow to report on under-represented and marginalised group other than women.

# 2024 KEY FIGURES

**40%** of PSAI members were women

**33%** of EC members were women

**47%** of the SG conveners were women

**2** of the Prize Winners were women

**41%** of the authors of the papers presented at PSAI Annual Conference were women

**39%** of the authors of the papers presented at PSAI Postgraduate Conference were women

**4** women were first authors out of 32 articles published in print in *Irish Political Studies*

# MEMBERSHIP

The membership list was provided by Taylor & Francis and covers all members who paid their membership fee in 2024<sup>1</sup>.

Since the creation of PSAI, men have formed a majority of the Association's members. Out of 227 members of the Association who had paid their dues for 2024, 90 were female (40%) and 136 were male (60%)<sup>2</sup>. This represents a 3 percentage-point increase in women's membership compared with 2023, and 11 additional female members. This is the highest level of female membership ever recorded at PSAI, according to previous Gender Audits.

Women are particularly well represented among new members. Among the 104 new members<sup>3</sup>, 51 (49%) were female. This is a 6 percentage-point increase in female representation among new members compared with 2023. Although T&F does not provide the academic status of the members, it can reasonably be expected that most of the new members are postgraduate students or early career researchers and that new memberships reflects more diverse demographics among the new generation of researchers in Ireland.

In comparison, 46 per cent of the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) account holders in 2023 were female<sup>4</sup>. The most recent iteration of the International Political Science Association survey recorded that women made up between 15.9

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<sup>1</sup> The membership list covers the period from 1 January – 31 December 2024 and was recovered on 4 December 2024.

<sup>2</sup> The gender of one member could not be identified.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor & Francis supplied a membership list differentiating new members from those who renewed their 2024 membership.

<sup>4</sup> ECPR uses a self-identification method by inviting account holders to indicate their gender in their personal space.

and 54.6 per cent of members in the largest member associations (>400 members) in 2022. The Associations with the lowest percentage of women were the Japanese PSA (15.9%) and the Korean PSA (17.3%). The Spanish PSA (54.6%) had the highest percentage of female members, followed by the Argentina PSA (46.7%), the Icelandic PSA (45.5%), and the Brazilian PSA (44.2%). Women represented 50.0 per cent of members in the American Political Science Association and 50.0% in the UK PSA in 2022. The PSAI in 2024 would rank at the same place as the Canadian PSA (40%) in 2022.

Table 1 shows figures of the overall membership of PSAI between 1999<sup>5</sup> and 2024. Figure 1 below presents the figures of the composition of the Association’s membership disaggregated by sex between 1999 and 2024.

**Table 1 Overall Membership, 1999-2024**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total number of members</b>
<b>1999</b>	_*
<b>2013</b>	180
<b>2014</b>	209
<b>2018</b>	_*
<b>2019</b>	143
<b>2020</b>	139
<b>2021</b>	141
<b>2022</b>	168
<b>2023</b>	216
<b>2024</b>	227

*\*Data on the total number of PSAI members is missing for the years 1999 and 2018*

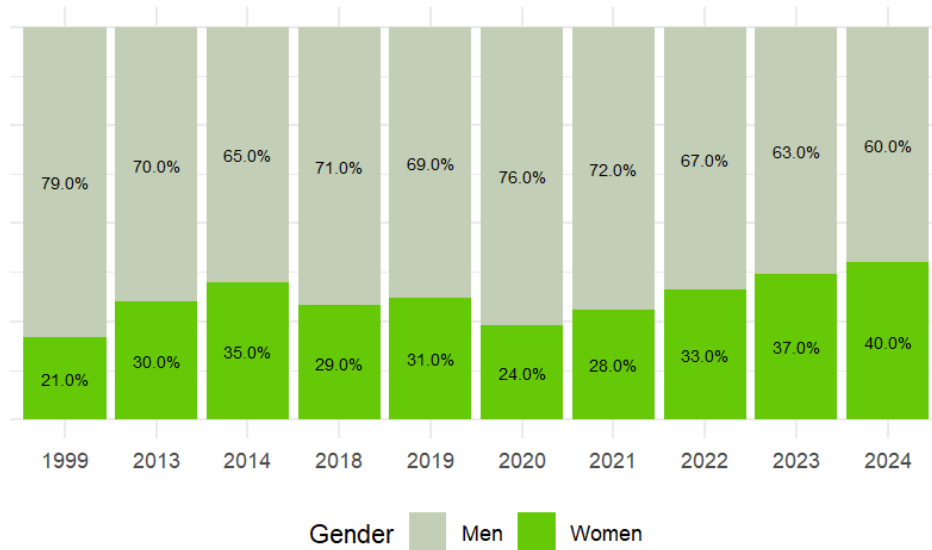
In 1999, women made up 21% of the members of the PSAI. By 2013, this figure had risen to 30%. Female membership reached a peak of 35% in 2014 and then fell by six points between 2014 and 2018. 2019 saw a small increase, but female membership dropped in 2020, corresponding with the Covid-19 pandemic year, the impact of which may have hindered women’s participation in the annual conference. In the same period, the overall number of PSAI members fell slightly. By the end of 2022, the share of PSAI female members had exceeded its pre-pandemic level, with women making up 1 in 3 members of the PSAI. 2023 and 2024 successively recorded the highest

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<sup>5</sup> Gender Audit 2015 by Claire McGing used 1999 PSAI data from John Coakley (1999) Political Science in Ireland. Third Edition. Dublin: Political Studies Association of Ireland.

proportion of female members of the Association, according to figures available from previous Gender Audits.

Figure 1 Member and Membership, 1999-2024





# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The PSAI elects its Executive Committee (EC) annually at the AGM, taking place during the Annual Conference. Not all positions are elected, as the Committee has the capacity to appoint EC members for specific roles.

Between 2015 and 2018, women made up exactly one third of the EC members. In 2018-2019, 38 per cent of the members of the EC were women. The 2021-2022 EC saw a substantial increase in women's representation compared with the previous academic year. Out of 13 positions, 7 were filled by women, representing 54 per cent of the EC. In the academic year 2022-2023, female representation in the EC dropped, with only 4 women for 14 roles, including three out of eight officer positions. The next year, the EC Committee reached gender parity with 7 out of 14 positions filled by women. In 2024-2025, the EC Committee was composed of 5 women out of 14 positions, including four out of eight officers' roles<sup>6</sup>.

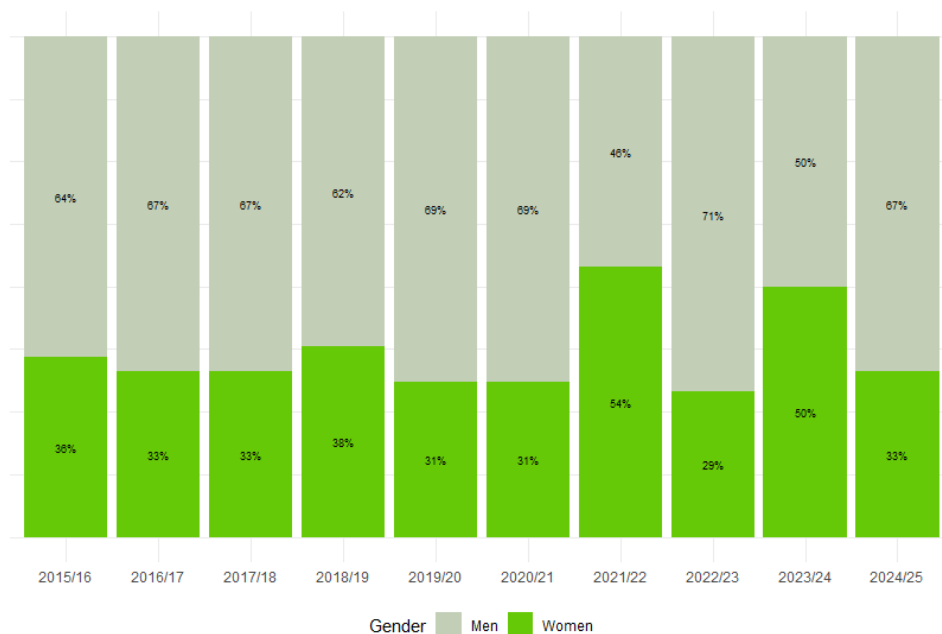
The Presidency of the PSAI has been held by men between 2005 and 2022, while women have held the Vice-presidency between 2012 and 2022. In the 2022 AGM, a woman was elected for the role of President and a man as Vice-President. She was the third woman to hold this position at PSAI<sup>7</sup>. Her mandate will lapse in October 2025.

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<sup>6</sup> Including the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, the Secretary and Treasury, the Postgraduate Representative, the Conference Organisation representative, the ED Officer and the Academic Freedom Officer.

<sup>7</sup> Yvonne Galligan served as President from 1999-2002; Maura Adshear from 2002-2005; and Jennifer Kavanagh from 2022.

Figure 2 Gender composition of the Executive Committee, 2015/16-2024/25



The following table shows the geographical distribution of Executive Committee members according to their university to which they are affiliated for the academic year 2024-2025. Out of 14 members, 6 are in Dublin, 1 in Belfast and 7 are affiliated to universities in the West of Ireland.

Table 2 Geographical distribution of EC members, 2024/25

City of University of affiliation	Number of EC members
Belfast	1
Cork	2
Dublin	6
Galway	2
Limerick	2
Waterford	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

# SPECIALIST GROUPS

PSAI Specialist Groups pursue the purpose of promoting research and networking activities in relation to a specific theme. Each group has a minimum of two conveners, each of whom is normally located in a different institution. Table 2 provides data on the composition of the leadership of the Specialist Groups by sex category for the academic year 2024-2025.

At the 2024 Annual Conference, a new 'Postgraduate and Early Career Researchers Specialist Group' was created. Furthermore, a few changes in the leadership of SGs were recorded since the last iteration of the Gender Audit, leading to an increase in the representation of women after several consecutive years of decline.

Out of 28 conveners for 12 specialist groups, almost half of them (13) are women. In 2023, they represented only 40 per cent of the conveners; in 2022, 44 per cent and in 2019, 51.7 per cent. Women are represented as co-conveners in all Specialist groups except two, whereas one SG has no male convenor. This is an improvement compared with the previous years, where four Specialist Groups did not have any female conveners, and one had no male conveners.

Table 3 Sex & Specialist Group Conveners,  
2024/25

Specialist Group	Female Convenor(s)	Male Convenor(s)
Computational Methods	0	2
Environmental Politics	1	1
European Studies	1	1
Gender and Politics	2	0
International Relations and Area Studies	1	1
Participatory and Deliberative Democracy	2	2
Peace and Conflict	2	1
Political Theory	1	1
Postgraduate and Early Career Researchers	1	1
Public Policy	1	2
Teaching and Learning in Politics	1	1
Voters, Parties and Elections	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>

# PRIZES

PSAI awards four prizes to recognise outstanding academic work. The awardees are usually revealed each year at the Annual Conference.

Two of these prizes are named after men (the Basil Chubb prize for Best PhD Thesis and the Brian Farrell Book prize). In 2018, the Best Paper prize was named after a woman (the late Professor Elizabeth Meehan). The Teaching and Learning prize is not named after any individual. In 2024, PSAI announced a new 'Ireland Thinks Best Paper Prize', which will be awarded to a Postgraduate or Early Career Researcher for the best paper presented at one of the PSAI Annual or Postgraduate Conferences in 2024.

As an informal practice, the EC ensures that sub-groups evaluating the nominees include at least one female and one male member.

In 2024, the four prizes were allocated to five individuals. Two of the five awardees were female (for the Elizabeth Meehan Prize). In addition, two women were awarded 'honourable mentions' for the Brian Farrell Book Prize and the Teaching and Learning Prize, respectively. Data available from previous reports since 2018 indicates that it is the first year in which more than one woman has been a prize awardee in a single year.

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2024 Annual Conference of PSAI took place on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October 2024. It was hosted by Trinity College Dublin and took place at the Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Golden Lane Dublin. The data produced is based on the final conference programme, which includes the names of the authors of papers. It was not possible to ascertain which of the co-authors attended the conference and presented their work.

The final conference programme includes 45 panels and roundtables totalling 245 authors, co-authors and roundtable speakers<sup>8</sup>. Of the 245 authors and co-authors featured in the final conference program, 100 (41 per cent) were female and 145 (59 per cent) were male<sup>9</sup>. In the previous year, 45 per cent of the authors and co-authors were female<sup>10</sup>. At the Annual Conference 2022, women represented 31 per cent of authors and co-authors. Comparable figures were recorded in the previous years. In 2024, three panels did not include any female author, and one panel did not include any male author. The panels comprising male authors only were chaired by a woman, and the panel made up of women authors only was chaired by a man. The roundtables featured five women and seven men. The 2024 Peter Mair Lecture was delivered by a man. With respect of the panel chairs at the 2024 Annual Conference, 19 out of 46 were women, making up 37 per cent of the chairs. Figure 3 presents the proportion of women and men panellists for different panels grouped by thematic area.

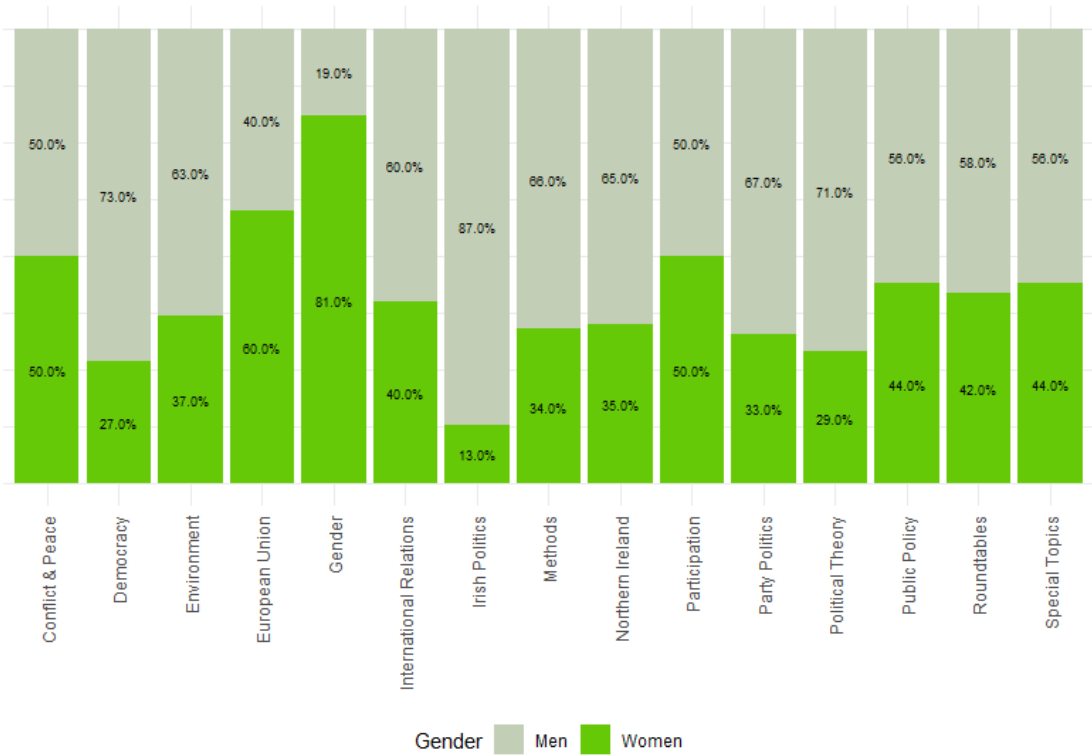
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<sup>8</sup> Some authors were featured in more than one paper. The data includes 4 roundtables featuring 13 speakers.

<sup>9</sup> These proportions are the same considering the panels only.

<sup>10</sup> The 2023 figure was higher than in any previous data recorded in the Gender Audits published since 2015.

Figure 3 Proportion of women & men panellists by area



# POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE

The PSAI's Postgraduate Conference takes place on a biannual basis. The 2024 edition took place on 5 and 6 December 2024 at University College Dublin.

The final version of the conference programme indicates that 23 postgraduate researchers presented their work on this occasion. In 2022, there were 28 participants. Among the panellists, 39 per cent (9) were women and 61 per cent (14) were men. In 2022, the panellists were evenly split between women (14) and men (14). At the 2021 Postgraduate Conference<sup>11</sup>, 43% of the named authors were female. Only 5 out of 7 panels were gender diverse. The panel on "Gender and Representation" did not include any men and was chaired by a woman, whereas the panel on "Media, Technology, and Political Communication" did not include any women and was chaired by a man. Women made up 3 out of 7 chairs (43 per cent), comparable to the 2022 and 2021 editions. The 2025 Keynote was delivered by a man.

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<sup>11</sup> The last Postgraduate conference took place in January 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



# FUNDING SCHEMES

The PSAI offers five funding schemes. In 2024, the EC decided to structure funding applications with submission deadlines and decision dates. New digital forms were created to facilitate the process.

The PSAI General Funding Application scheme is designed to promote scholarly networking and research activity in Political Science across the island of Ireland by means of financial support for workshops and other occasional events.

The Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher (PEC) Funding Scheme was established to support members of the PSAI who are postgraduate students and Early Career Researchers. Early Career Researchers for the purpose of this scheme are considered as those who have been awarded their PhD in the last three years from the date of graduation. The scheme supports PEC members seeking to attend academic conferences to present a paper and training programmes. In addition, the PSAI offered a separate Travel Funding Support Scheme to facilitate the attendance of PEC at its Annual Conference. In 2024, 20 PEC members received the PEC funding, including 9 men and 11 women.

The PSAI Conference Inclusion Scheme – Domestic Award is a special scheme to support attendance at the Annual Conference for scholars from non-traditional backgrounds on the Island of Ireland who face challenges in accessing institutional support. The scheme is intended to increase diversity and broaden the participation at our conference by supporting those not in established academic posts from underrepresented groups including racial, religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities, LGBTI+ individuals, members of the Traveller community, scholars with disabilities, and independent non-academics (without an

academic affiliation) who wish to attend the conference. In 2024, no application was received for the Inclusion Scheme – Domestic Award.

The PSAI Conference Inclusion Scheme – International Award is a special scheme to support attendance at the Annual Conference for scholars and postgraduate students from traditionally underrepresented or underserved global scholarly communities by awarding a grant covering airfare and accommodation (in full or in part) to researchers from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. In 2024, five applications were received for the Inclusion Scheme – International Award, including four men<sup>12</sup>. The recipient of the Internal Inclusion Award was a man.

The Specialist Group Funding is available for events from the PSAI’s Specialist Groups, and the Book Launch Fund is available to PSAI members seeking funding for book launch events.

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<sup>12</sup> One of the applicants’ names was not provided.

# IRISH POLITICAL STUDIES

PSAI publishes the journal of *Irish Political Studies* (IPS). IPS has two co-editors. In 2024, these were two men.

IPS publishes four issues a year, including one issue as the Data yearbook. Altogether, IPS published in print 32 articles with 42 authors in 2024<sup>13</sup>. Women represented 17 per cent of all authors on articles published during 2024. Four of these 32 articles had a woman as first author (13 per cent). In 2023, women represented 14 per cent of all authors and 6 per cent of the first authors. In 2022, 48 per cent of all authors were women. In 2021, women formed 34.7 per cent of the first authors. The Special Issue published in June 2024 had two male guest editors.

At the end of 2023, it was decided to renew the IPS Editorial Board (EB) through new appointment modalities. From 2024 on, 20 members would be appointed for a duration of 4 years with a biennial renewal of half of the EB. To begin with, the appointment process foresaw that ten members would be appointed for a four years' terms and another ten for a two years' terms. Following an open call circulated in the PSAI's newsletter at the end of 2023, 17 members were appointed at the beginning of 2024 through a comparative assessment by a special sub-committee of the PSAI Executive Committee. Out of these 17 EB members, only two were women, making up less than 12 per cent of all EB members. This was a significant drop

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<sup>13</sup> This includes 6 book reviews with two female first authors and two articles published in the Data Yearbook issue.

compared with the previous EB, in which 30 per cent of the members were women.

In addition, an International Advisory Board (IAB) was created, and 24 members were appointed during 2024, comprising one third of women (8 individuals). The newly appointed EB and IAB met for the first time at the 2024 PSAI Annual Conference.

The PSAI's Executive Committee has been concerned with addressing the gender gap within the EB. The EC decided to fill the remaining three seats on the EB after the 2024 Annual Conference by launching a new open call advertised through internal and external channels, as well as to improve the communication around the role's description with the aim of attracting applications from a broader audience, in particular members that were less familiar with the work of the IPS's Editorial Board. The EC also chose to add a wording clearly pointing at addressing the gender imbalance to the call.

# CONCLUSION

## Progress

- PSAI recorded its highest level of female membership since its creation for the second consecutive year. In 2024, women represented 40 per cent of all members, a 3 percentage-point increase compared with 2023.
- Although the share of female Executive Committee members fluctuates, women were well-represented in PSAI officers' roles in the academic year 2024/25.
- The Specialist Groups' convenors recovered an equal representation of women and men after two consecutive years of decline. Sex-segregation in Specialist Groups has decreased in 2024.
- In 2024 and for the first time, two women were awarded a PSAI Prize, both for the Elizabeth Meehan Prize.
- Women participation at the Annual Conference has become higher since a couple of years, reaching a level above 40 per cent for both 2023 and 2024. Sex-segregation at the Annual Conference has fallen.

## Gaps

- Sex-segregation in specialist groups and conference panels still occurs. This is especially noticeable at the Postgraduate Conference.
- Women were less represented at the 2024 Postgraduate Conference than at the 2024 Annual Conference, a setback compared with the 2022 edition in which the panellists were evenly split between women and men.

- Female authors were largely underrepresented in the 2023 and 2024 *Irish Political Studies* issues.
- Women were severely underrepresented within the newly appointed IPS Editorial Board.

## Moving forward

- The 2024 membership data confirm the previous years' trend, where a higher proportion of women was recorded. PSAI should continue its efforts to attract and retain new memberships, which represent a more diverse generation of political scientists.
- PSAI should consider implementing a self-identification method for data collection purposes, by inviting its members to identify their gender, and possibly other demographic data. Other Political Studies Associations already use such data collection method. The PSAI could also collect this data at the conference registration and through its funding schemes' application forms.
- The PSAI could investigate the underlying causes of women's underrepresentation among the IPS's Editorial Board and in the authorship of the articles published, which are well below the levels of the PSAI female membership and participation in its activities.
- To preserve the progress achieved in improving equality and diversity in several areas, the PSAI should sustain its conscious efforts throughout all its activities.