

Job Orientated Training

- Does the company keep a central database of individuals' skills?
- Does the company map current employee skills against future business requirements?
- Is training arranged so everyone can participate?
- Is everyone likely to benefit from the training been invited to attend?
- Do all employees feel that all relevant training is open to them?
- Do current training and development opportunities need to be extended to revised to help women progress?
- Do the company run women only development and training programmes?
- Are all employees encouraged to gain additional qualifications and training and can this be carried out in work time?
- Does the company audit the skills and progression of minority and disadvantaged groups of employees?

Work-Life Balance

- Has the company asked employees what arrangements are wanted and in use?
- Is there a common understanding of work-life balance or flexible working throughout the company?
- Are flexible working arrangements clearly communicated to all employees?
- Are employees encouraged to take advantage of flexible working arrangements?
- Are all jobs at all levels seriously considered for part-time, job-share and flexible working arrangements?
- Is it clear that work-balance/flexible working options are equally available to men and women?
- Do flexible working options provide for training and career development opportunities?
- Does the company communicate the success of flexible working in the organisation?

**For further Amicus negotiators guidance,
visit www.amicustheunion.org**

Examples of successes

Equal pay – EDS

Following individual grievances raised by Amicus on behalf of 2 women members in late 2004, and after the completion of equal pay questionnaires, hearings were held for both cases. In the first, the grievance was turned down, EDS citing different backgrounds, differences in performance and skills as the reasons for differences in pay. An appeal was lodged and led at Regional Officer level.

As a result, the pay of the woman member was increased by 15% and a change to a higher pay grade was achieved. Assurance was given that with the pay increase, our member was within 10-15% of her male colleague. There was a commitment to monitor the member's pay with a view to achieving parity within 12-18 months.

A hearing was held for the second case where our member knew the starting salary of her male colleague because she had been involved with his recruitment. It was higher than her own. Again, the company denied discrimination on gender grounds claiming that EDS pay restraint had caused the differential. However, at the next available pay review, our member was awarded a 19.5% pay increase. Our member was asked by EDS if she wanted to appeal. She asked if this increase had given her pay parity and was told it did. She was satisfied her grievance had been resolved.



Background

Whilst companies continually berate the lack of suitably skilled candidates for skilled positions it would appear that somewhere along the line women are either being overlooked by employers or are not even considering careers in Electrical Engineering, IT and Electronics in the first place.

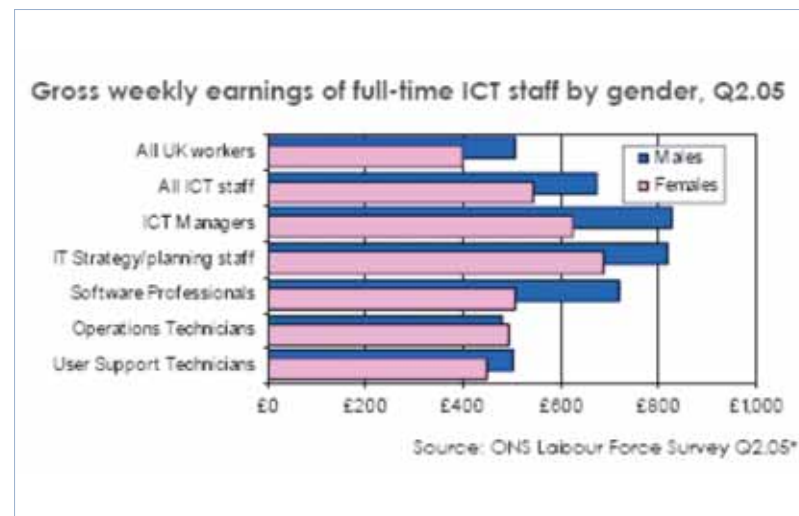
Considering data from ONS spanning the last four years, on average whilst women have formed around 45% of the UK workforce overall, within the IT sector the figure is less than 20% (17% in the second quarter of 2005).

UK electronics employs a greater proportion of women than engineering as a whole (28% compared with 19%), but a lower proportion than in the economy as a whole. Large numbers of women are employed in electronics assembly operations, but 'off shoring' of this work may lead to greatly lower numbers of women employed in the future.

Pay

The most recent figures, published by the Office of National Statistics, show that the pay gap for full-time workers is 17%, and the gap between part-time women workers and full-time male workers is 38%.

According to figures produced by e-skills UK (e-skills Bulletin Q2 2005), female IT staff still earn on average, £117 per week (18%) less than their male counterparts (who earn £642 gross per week on average). A larger proportion of female IT staff work part-time, but even if just full-time IT staff are considered, average (gross) female earnings are still around £77 per week or 12% lower than those of men (who earn £654 per week).



Though female IT staff appear to earn less than their male co-workers throughout their working lives, the gap in earnings is minimal during the earlier stages of career development. In fact women aged 20-29 earn just 2% less than men of that age on average, compared with a differential of around 20% for all other age bands.

Working Hours

As within the workforce more generally, women in IT jobs are much more likely than men to be employed part-time - 18% of them working in this manner compared with just 3% of male IT workers. It is still way below the national average for part-time working amongst women at 45%.

In addition, the presence of a long hours culture and the expectation of people working unpaid overtime may put off or disadvantage women.

According to the latest Workforce Employment Relations Survey, amongst IT professionals

- 38% work unpaid overtime
- the average unpaid overtime worked in 2006 is 6 hours 48 minutes
- the average unpaid overtime worked in 2005 was 6 hours 6 minutes
- the pay equivalent of unpaid overtime in 2006 is £5589

Women and Work Commission interim report

The Interim Report of the Women and Work Commission was published on 8 March. There are some 40 recommendations. Whilst many of these are aimed at Government and public agencies, some of the recommendations can be incorporated into a strategy for the Electrical Engineering, Electronics and IT sector.

Proposed Amicus Charter for Electrical Engineering, Electronics and IT companies

1. Development of open, fair and transparent pay systems
2. Equal treatment in pay through equal pay audits
3. Promotion of work-life balance policies, including childcare and eldercare support and action to change the long hours culture, including payment for out of hours working, time off for travel etc.
4. Promotion of flexible working arrangements including part-time working, flexible working, career breaks, sabbatical leave etc complemented by
 - i. identifying senior role models, working part time or job sharing, who will champion the spread of best practice among managers
 - ii. web-based job matching of those wanting to work part time with those offering quality jobs on a part-time or job share basis
 - iii. job share services to put potential job share partners in touch and aimed at high quality occupations
 - iv. e-networks for senior and professional women
5. Equality proofing of all employment policies to ensure that these do not directly or indirectly discriminate against women
6. Continual and regular training for managers at all levels on diversity and flexibility issues.
7. Capacity building to support training and development for equality reps and sharing of best practice to raise awareness amongst activists
8. Diversity compliant contracting to use procurement to spread best practice.
9. A target of 50% of all large company boards and senior management teams to be women

Action plan for Electrical Engineering, Electronics and IT companies Recruitment and Promotion

- Where is the best place to advertise the posts to ensure a diverse pool of applicants?
- Are any of the job requirements, qualifications and criteria likely to prevent women applying?
- Are all jobs and promotion posts available on a flexible basis?
- Are the interview panels gender balanced?
- Are selection procedures being applied uniformly across the organisation?
- Are selection processes fair and open?
- Does the appraisal and development system identify when an employee has sufficient experience to apply for promotion irrespective of the hours worked?
- Does recruitment and promotion depend on access to informal networks?
- Has the company implemented a mentoring scheme, job shadowing or a women's network?
- Is career advice and guidance available to all employees?
- Does career progression depend on mobility?

Equality Training

- Is equality training provided to all employees?
- Does equality form part of any induction training?
- Does the content of training focus on promoting equality and diversity rather than the common practice of compliance with the law?