



Diversity analysis

# Gender distribution in the MU Selection process 2019 - 2021

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# Gender distribution in the MU Selection process

## Introduction

It is generally observed that women are underrepresented in leader and senior roles (e.g., World Economic Forum, 2022). Similarly, data from LinkedIn show an overall share of 31% women in leadership roles, although shares vary by industry (World Economic Forum, 2022, p. 36). An analysis from Korn Ferry (2019) shows

that a quarter, 25%, of top leaders (C-suite) are women. The lowest share was found in CEO positions, with 6%. Also figures from Mercer (Edwards et al., 2020, p.17) and McKinsey & Company (2020, p. 8) show a leaky career pipeline from entry levels to executive roles/C-suite level.

## Analysis of data from selection processes 2019-2021.

In this report the gender distribution in different steps of the Mercuri Urval (MU) selection process is studied. The analyses are based on data on individuals that have participated in MU selection processes to leader positions (Executives and Managers) January 2019 - December 2021. The sample consist 9,206 individuals, of whom 69

percent ( $n = 6,390$ ) are men and 31 percent ( $n = 2,816$ ) are women.

The table below shows the gender distribution throughout the selection process (assessment to appointment).

**Table 1.** Gender distribution at each stage, assessments made January 2019 - December 2021, (percentages).

	Male proportion	Female proportion
Assessment	69.4	30.6
Recommendation*	68.1	31.9
Appointment *	65.5	34.5

*\*) Statistically significant increase in proportion of women and decrease in proportion of men compared to the assessment stage. (There are no statistically significant difference between the recommendation and the appointment stage).*

The table show that the gender proportion remains approximately the same throughout the selection process. However, the statistical analyses show smaller statistically significant differences in the proportion of men and women during the process. Data show an increase of the proportion of women from 30.6% to 34.5%.

Table 2 illustrates the proportion of assessed men and women respectively at each stage, starting with 100% at assessment stage.

**Table 2.** Proportion of assessed at each stage, assessments made January 2019 - December 2021, (percentages).

	Total	Men	Women
Assessment	100	100	100
Recommendation*	38.4	37.7	40.1
Appointment *	10.8	10.2	12.2

\*) Statistically significant difference between men and women.

A slightly higher proportion women than men are recommended (40% vs 38%,  $p < .05$ ), and appointed (12% vs 10%,  $p < .01$ ).

## Conclusions

The results show that the gender proportion in general remain at the same level throughout the selection process, although a slight increase of the proportion of women during the process has been observed.

**At Assessment stage:** 31% women; 69% men  
**At Recommendation stage:** 32% women; 68% men  
**At Appointment stage:** 35% women; 65% men

The female representation of appointments after being assessed by Mercuri Urval experts using the MU Assessment methodology (35%) are slightly higher compared to the studies above: Korn Ferry (2019) reported 25% women in C-suite roles among 1,000 largest U.S. companies. The Mercer study (Edwards et al., 2020) covered over 1,100 organizations across the world. They found that the female representation was 23% among Executives and 29% among Senior managers. McKinsey & Company (2020) reported 21% and 33% respectively for female Executives and Senior managers in American companies.

An important observation from previous analyses (Key Values and Principles, Mercuri Urval, 2022) is that diversity in the candidate pool is key for diversity in appointments. The idea that diversity in the candidate pool is key for diversity is supported in this study. If diversity in the MU selection process is to be influenced, it ought to be influenced at the Assessment stage, i.e., in the candidate pool.

Similarly, to other studies made the candidate pool contains a majority of men. However, the proportion of men is lower in the MU data than in data from other studies (e.g., Edwards et al., 2020). The proportions of men and women are in this study generally constant in different stages of the selection process, indicating a selection process without systematic gender discrimination.

## References

**Edwards, R., Guzzo, R., Jackson, C., Knoepfelmacher, A., & Nalbantian, H.** (2020). *Let's get real about equality: When women thrive 2020 global report*. Mercer.

**Korn Ferry** (2019). *Korn Ferry Analysis of Largest U.S. Companies Shows Percentage of Women in C-Suite Roles Inches Up from Previous Year*.

**McKinsey & Company** (2020). *Women in the Workplace 2020*.

**Mercuri Urval** (2022). *Mercuri Urval Key Values and Principles*

**World Economic Forum** (2022). *Global Gender Gap Report 2022*.

