

Embedding EDI in Grant Proposals

Funders are increasingly aware of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and you will be required to embed EDI principals into your proposal and/or provide explicit statements on your approach to EDI. Hence, this document is intended to guide researchers to incorporate EDI principles within grant proposals. Some example phrases to use in grant proposals are included but these are not intended to be simply cut and paste as your approach will need to be tailored to your research programme, the EDI challenges in your sector/research, what your Department/School and what you have been asked to comment on by the funder(s). Note that a frequent criticism of EDI in proposals is that there is too much focus on gender and/or policy rather than action/implementation.

If you notice any errors or broken links in the document or wish to provide additional content, please notify Karen Coopman, k.coopman@lboro.ac.uk.

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What do we need to be aware of when considering EDI principles?

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) should be a central consideration when planning any research.

- As an institution we want to produce research that is trustworthy and socially responsible.
- A diverse research team can bring different perspectives and ideas, which can lead to more innovative and robust research.
- If research includes any type of data from people, then ensuring EDI within that data can enable better and more representative research outcomes.
- Funders now expect EDI best practice to be embedded throughout proposals. A good idea may fail to get funded if EDI is not adequately addressed.

“The following characteristics are protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.” (Equality Act 2010)

Best practice can also go beyond protected characteristics – e.g. consideration of socio-economic status and deprivation and is continuing to evolve (e.g., consideration of impacts of menopause becoming more prevalent).

When EDI is overlooked in STEM research, significant biases can be discovered in real world applications. For example, object detection training sets that predominantly use lighter skin tones – have created technologies that fail to work effectively for people with darker skin tones. The effects of this have been shown from automated hand dryers that only work for light skinned hands, through to autonomous vehicles that are less able to detect and avoid black pedestrians.

Overview of EDI at Loughborough University

The University policy on EDI can be found at the link below. Here you will find details of the various staff groups and networks as well as the support available for students and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion blog. Data related to e.g. Athena Swan awards can also be found within these pages.

[Equality, diversity & inclusion | Human Resources | Loughborough University \(lboro.ac.uk\)](#)

All Schools are committed to the goals and aspirations of the University and may have their own Action Plans. E.g. in AACME this can be found at:

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/schools/aacme/edi/committee/>

It should also be noted that Loughborough University now has a Pro Vice Chancellor (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion):

[Pro Vice-Chancellor \(Equity, Diversity and Inclusion\) | Vice-Chancellor's Office | Loughborough University \(lboro.ac.uk\)](#)

Training in EDI for Staff and Doctoral Researchers

Staff and research associates:

For internal training opportunities log in to [my.HR](#) and search in the Learning section.

Compulsory training for everyone: Respecting Diversity, Unconscious bias.

Compulsory for those with recruitment responsibilities: Recruitment & Selection.

Doctoral Researchers: for training opportunities look at the [Doctoral college development programme \(lboro.ac.uk\)](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/doctoral-college-development-programme).

All:

External opportunities include advance HE free workshops, Royal Academy of Engineering, Royal Society of Chemistry, see [Appendix 1](#) for links to external websites.

When to consider EDI in grant proposals?

It is important to consider EDI throughout the following stages of grant writing, managing the project and generating further impact:

Design of the Research

EDI must be considered during the conception of the grant, design of the research, developing hypotheses and design of related impact activities. This can include:

- **Design of research** – e.g., designing vehicles systems and the consideration of different heights and weights for different demographics.
- **Responsible research & innovation** – taking into account the wider impact of research & innovation, such as unintended consequences, ethical dilemmas, social transformations, e.g., impact on vulnerable communities, development of materials or machinery.
- **Data diversity** – e.g., datasets that have been generated may only originate from western countries or a particular subset of the population. If possible, use broader datasets and justify why.
- **Participants in research**- consider sex/race or other characteristics of participants e.g., partaking in surveys, in studies involving human tissue donation, involvement in advisory boards.
- **Development opportunities** – e.g., if knowledge exchange through a placement at another HEI is an important part of your research plan, consider how you will ensure this opportunity is available to all potential researchers on the project.
- **Design of potential impact activities** – e.g., consider who/where you are targeting with public engagement activities.
- **Constitution of the team** – consider the constitution of your investigator team and any associated advisory boards. E.g., have you invited a diverse group of investigators with appropriate expertise? It may be appropriate to have an EDI champion/lead as part of your management structure for large grants (e.g. Hubs, Centres).

Consider how you can apply EDI principles when planning your research and writing the proposal, including the research question and hypothesis, the research methods you will use and the types of impact and dissemination activities you will plan. Things to consider may include gendered language, diversity of participants involved in a study, intersectionality (age, ethnicity, race). E.g., use the term sex rather than gender when describing the number of male or female participants in a study. Work closely with any collaborators (internal, external, HEI or industry) to ensure your approaches align and best practice is shared.

[Appendix 2](#) provides information on how to complete a full **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**. An EIA is a systematic process to identify the impact, or likely impact, of a project on different groups of people such as those with caring responsibilities or that identify as LGBT+, including positive, neutral and negative impacts. At this time it is not a requirement by any funding agencies but is a useful tool to help ensure you have considered a projects potential impact.

Application for funding

EDI principles can be incorporated throughout a proposal. For example, in the track record you can state how you have upheld these principles previously, and in the main body of a proposal outline how you will embed EDI throughout the project and not only during advertising and recruitment of research staff and doctoral researchers. You can also state what EDI considerations went into the make up of the team. You may refer to University policies in an environment section or letter of support to show how important EDI is to the Loughborough research environment but avoid relying on generic statements and policies.

Example questions that you should be prepared to answer when preparing or submitting a grant or at interview include:

- Have you considered EDI when putting the proposal together and how you will manage it during the work?
- What is your approach to ED&I on this XXX grant?
- How will Responsible Research and innovation be embedded in your XXX grant?
- How will you endorse EDI in advertising, recruitment and the research programme?
- What EDI considerations have been taken in account for the constitution of the bid team?
- What active EDI considerations will you use in the allocation of the PhD positions? (for a CDT-type grant)
- What innovative EDI actions will you take in the running of this grant?
- How will you ensure all the partners (internal and external) abide by your EDI action plan?
- How would you ensure you measure and evaluate the EDI impact of your research or grant?

For some example statements see [Appendix 3](#).

When to consider EDI once your grant application is successful?

Setting up the research

This is the planning stage, where you have successfully secured funding before the project is due to start. You will need to consider planning of the research and recruitment in more detail. If you have completed an EIA don't forget to refer back to it.

Recruitment:

- Job advert and job information (person and job specification) avoid using gendered language. Run the text through a gender decoder e.g, <https://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/> or <https://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/gender-bias-decoder/>.
- Interviewing – consider the composition of the panel and interview questions (see Recruitment & Selection training) and lead by example (e.g., call out and challenge biased comments).
- Induction and support, for recruited research staff see [HR New Staff Induction and Mandatory Training \(lboro.ac.uk\)](#), and for Doctoral Researchers see the Doctoral College [webpages \(lboro.ac.uk\)](#). Your school may have additional, specific induction resources e.g., [AACME intranet](#).

Doing the Research

Work environment: How will you ensure the research is conducted in a way that aligns with EDI principles? Consider staff, research associates, doctoral researchers and technicians involved and ensure.

Continual monitoring: Continual monitoring is important. Consider EDI in your research activities, analysis and reporting of results and keep yourself and the team up to date on training and available support. Discuss EDI in PDR of research staff, for example, and adjustments that may need to be made due to changing circumstance and EDI related objectives that they could be set (e.g., raising their awareness or becoming a champion).

Remember to:

- Encourage all members of the team to engage with mentoring programmes in the School or across the University and to consider engaging with a mentor who is different to themselves.
- Encourage staff and research associates to engage with groups across campus such as: BAME Staff Network, the Loughborough University Women's Network (MAIA), Staff Inclusivity Group and others. Details can be found here: [Staff Networks \(lboro.ac.uk\)](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/staff-networks/).
- Encourage doctoral researchers to engage with the support services available. See [Support for students \(lboro.ac.uk\)](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/support-for-students/) for access to general support and guidance (e.g., wellbeing advisors) and [Doctoral college support and training \(lboro.ac.uk\)](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/doctoral-college-support-and-training/) for doctoral researcher specific opportunities (e.g., PhD support network, LGBT+ research). Remind doctoral researchers that they can raise issues with their reps who can champion doctoral researcher rights within the Doctoral College and LSU as well as within their School ([Peer representation for Doctoral Researchers \(lboro.ac.uk\)](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/peer-representation-for-doctoral-researchers/))
- Create an environment that is free of bullying and harassment – familiarise yourself with the University policy and reporting system ([University policy on bullying and harassment \(lboro.ac.uk\)](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/university-policy-on-bullying-and-harassment/)) and lead by example (e.g., call out inappropriate behaviour).
- Make EDI a standing agenda item on management and advisory board meetings as appropriate to ensure this is considered regularly and best practice is shared.

Who to contact if you have questions?

General questions on EDI and approaches to EDI: contact the School EDI champion or equivalent.

Questions related to your grant proposal: contact your Research Development Manager or Partnership Development manager

Appendix 1 – Links to external resources and further reading

General:

<http://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights>

Links to further training:

- Advance HE: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Advance HE \(advance-he.ac.uk\)](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/)
- Royal Academy of Engineering: [Diversity & inclusion - Royal Academy of Engineering \(raeng.org.uk\)](https://www.raeng.org.uk/diversity-inclusion/)
- Royal Society of Chemistry: [Royal Society of Chemistry resources \(rsc.org\)](https://www.rsc.org/diversity-inclusion/)

Links to funders:

Have a look at the funders' webpages for information or for a contact person you could get more information from. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but captures some of our most common funders.

UKRI –

- [UKRI EDI overview \(ukri.org\)](https://www.ukri.org/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/)
- [UKRI EDI Strategy \(ukri.org\)](https://www.ukri.org/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/strategy/)
- [EPSRC guidance for applicant on funding support for flexible working and carers \(UKRI.org\)](https://www.ukri.org/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/epsrc-guidance-for-applicant-on-funding-support-for-flexible-working-and-carers/)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(ED&I\) at EPSRC - EPSRC website \(ukri.org\)](https://www.ukri.org/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/epsrc-website/)
- [Equality, Diversity and inclusion \(EDI&I\) at ESRC – ESRC website \(ukri.org\)](https://www.ukri.org/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/esrc-website/)

Other

- **Leverhume:** [EDI at the Leverhume Trust \(leverhume.ac.uk\)](https://www.leverhume.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/)
- **STFC:** <https://stfc.ukri.org/about-us/how-we-are-governed/policies-standards/equality-schemes/>
- **The Royal Society:** <https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/about-grants/>

Additional Resources if you wish to broaden your understanding of EDI, best practice in EDI and responsible research and innovation:

Web-resources

[What is Gendered Innovations? | Gendered Innovations \(stanford.edu\)](https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/)

[How to Avoid Sexist or Gendered Language | Proofed's Writing Tips \(getproofed.com\)](https://www.getproofed.com/blog/avoid-sexist-gendered-language/)

[Research and data briefing 2 Intersectional approaches to equality research and data.pdf \(ecu.ac.uk\)](https://www.ecu.ac.uk/research-and-data-briefing-2-intersectional-approaches-to-equality-research-and-data.pdf)

[Equality, diversity and inclusion | CIPD](https://www.cipd.co.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/)

CIPD: [A guide to managing menopause at work: guidance for line managers \(cipd.co.uk\)](https://www.cipd.co.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/a-guide-to-managing-menopause-at-work-guidance-for-line-managers/)

Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in Innovation:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/902986/InnovateUK_Supporting_Diversity_and_Inclusion_in_innovation_WEBVERSION.pdf

[190522 Inclusive Conference Guide.pdf \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

[Making Your Event Accessible - Equality and Inclusion Unit \(leeds.ac.uk\)](#)

<https://disc.hw.ac.uk/en-disc-enabling-neurodiverse-inclusive-science-careers/>

UKRI: responsible research and innovation <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/responsible-innovation/>

[A Practical Guide to Responsible Research and Innovation \(fosteropenscience.eu\)](#)

Articles & Papers

[Gendered Innovations 2: How Inclusive Analysis Contributes to Research and Innovation \(europa.eu\)](#)

Books

Caroline Criado Perez (2020), Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men. Vintage Books.

Appendix 2 –Completing an equality impact assessment (EIA)

EIA is a decision making tool to help identify the impact, or likely impact, of a project on different groups of people such as those with caring responsibilities or that identify as LGBT+. It asks you to identify positive, neutral and negative impacts per group. Although often used when creating a new or revised policy/function to assess the impact on various groups of people, the principal can also be applied to your research.

Further information, including some training and a blank proforma can be found here: [How to complete an EIA \(lboro.ac.uk\)](#)

Appendix 3 - EDI statements in grant proposals

It is generally expected that EDI will be embedded throughout proposals – it is not enough to write a single brief statement on EDI. It is vital that EDI is considered across every aspect of the research and visible throughout the proposal but below are some phrases for inspiration. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Track records

Include any EDI roles in your track record:

- PI: XXX is Professor of ... and Deputy Head (EDI) of the ... Engineering Department at ...
- In 2018, she/he was appointed Deputy Director of EDI for the Faculty of ...
- Her/His experience in project and human resources management, in the EDI context, PGR supervision, and co-investigative input on major grants equips her appropriately to achieve these goals and to effectively manage the project overall as provisioned.

Research Programme Management

Say how EDI principles will be embedded in your research activities, recruitment of researchers and doctoral researchers or access to equipment/facilities. If you have an EDI champion/lead in your management structure, justify their added value.

- Responsible Research & Innovation and EDI policies will be assessed by the biannual attendance at Lead Academic Team meetings of staff from the universities' Research Support offices, drawing on their Ethical and Inclusivity Policy Frameworks to supplement the Anticipate, Reflect, Engage and Act (AREA) approach set out by EPSRC.
- Early-career researchers (ECRs) and externally funded PhD students will be assigned to this project based on equality, diversity, and inclusivity principles.
- To attract diverse applicants and ensure a healthy project culture, all investigators will undergo Unconscious Bias and Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity training prior to recruitment, with advert wording chosen carefully [1].
[1] <http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>
- In hiring researchers for my project, I will apply the latest research in equality and diversity. For example, my job adverts will avoid the use of gendered wording to prevent gender bias in applicants [2]. I will also use a longer shortlist of applicants where possible, which is known to increase the consideration of females in male-dominated domains [3].
[2] D. Gaucher et al, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 101 (2011) 109.
[3] B.J. Lucas et al, Nature Human Behaviour (2021) 1–7.
- £Xk of flexible funding is requested to enable the team (and/or advisory board) to overcome barriers to participation such as help with caring responsibilities or mobility costs.
- Access to equipment will be through an automated booking system to avoid any human bias and will provide users with an opportunity to indicate if they require additional support should they have any disabilities.

Case for Support

Where human participants are involved, say something about their selection. Justify the use of particular data sets or why a more diverse data set is required:

- Where relevant we will strive to recruit a suitably diverse and representative group of participants for each study.
- In this study, we will aim to recruit XX participants with XX ethnic background specifically due to the prevalence of disease XX in this community.

ED&I and Responsible Innovation

If appropriate, say something about the University's credentials in EDI (see 'Overview of EDI at Loughborough University' and the links therein for our own credentials)

- The universities involved take ED&I seriously and have policies in place to support it actively. For example, UoX has the only engineering faculty in the UK to have achieved *Athena Gold* status. The staff involved in recruiting at all four institutions are trained in the dangers of unconscious bias. Recruiting will be done using anonymised applications. We employ "Gender Decoder" to ensure that job advertisements do not discourage applications from any specific sector.

Justification of resources / Staff – Directly incurred costs

Say how EDI principles will be applied during recruitment of researchers and doctoral reserachers (but don't repeat if this is already in the management section):

- The PDRA's will be recruited by strictly adhering to the *EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)* policies enforced in the three partner Universities.
- Provision has been made to recruit the PDRA according to best practice in HR and EDI by appointing a panel and advisory board under the guidance of the Faculty Director of EDI.
- Recruitment will follow ... policies on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; both institutions hold Athena Swan Silver awards.

Institution Letter of support

Mention EDI roles of PI, Cis and the university credentials in EDI (but don't repeat if it's already in the Case for Support, or Track Records):

- She has made valuable contributions to school teaching and administration in the last two years and as a Faculty Deputy Director of EDI, she understands the development of a world-class research environment that fosters the best and brightest talent regardless of background, principles to which the School remains resolutely committed.
- Upon a successful proposal, I confirm that XXX University will:
 - Ensure the continued adoption of best practice throughout the project in terms of hiring and management via oversight and support of the process from the Faculty EDI team.