

Equality and Diversity Actions for All

Ten actions to improve equality and diversity for research staff in your institution

1. Lead from the top with a review of senior management teams from an equality and diversity perspective.

- Review your equality and diversity policies, concordat implementation plan, Athena Swan departments and strategy regarding the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award. Is thinking and energy in this area as joined up as it could be?
- What structures and work practices might be contributing to lack of diversity at senior levels?

2. Demonstrate the business case for equality and diversity highlighting the benefits of inclusive practices.

- Is your institution clear on the business case for diversity, and how can this be translated into institutional practice?
- How accountable are senior leaders and other managers for supporting and promoting equality and diversity?

3. Review your HR policy: annual review, appraisals, flexible working options and programmes of support for returning to work.

- What support is currently offered to individuals returning to work after a period of parental leave?
- What is your flexible working policy and how is it implemented across your institution?

4. Run a positive communications campaign and make it easy for your researcher community to understand.

- What are the key points are of your equality and diversity policies?
- What proportion of staff in your institution discloses their full equality and diversity needs?

5. Create an inclusive research environment.

- What is your institutional culture with regard to meetings and work patterns?
- When are meetings scheduled and how inclusive does this make them?

6. Include unconscious bias training in staff development for all staff involved in research.

- Do staff in your institution fully understand unconscious bias?
- Do individuals understand the impact of unconscious bias in terms of their decision making when recruiting and leading teams?

7. Embed every researcher counts resources in the development of principal investigators, research leaders and research staff.

- Are staff experiencing equality and diversity training beyond online modules?
- Could elements of equality and diversity training be implemented into existing leadership and management programmes?

8. Inspire with positive role models from the research community.

- Who are the positive role models for equality and diversity in your organisation?
- How can you raise their profile and share their experiences with others?

9. Establish mentoring schemes for all research staff.

- Do you have mentoring schemes available in your institution?
- Could they be better utilised by research staff?

10. Foster and support staff networking groups for all protected characteristics.

- Do you have strong staff networks?
- If not, how could they be established?



No-one should experience inequality as a result of who they are or where they come from. Sector level change will only come about if enough universities take steps to bring about real change at institutional level. The actions outlined in this pamphlet provide a good starting point.

Professor Dianne Berry, OBE, University of Reading

1. Lead from the top with a review of senior management teams from an equality and diversity perspective.



Diversity can only really be successfully achieved if led and implemented from the highest levels. Therefore, it is important to undertake a review of the make up of senior management and leadership teams and consider the implications of this for your organisation. Generally, some groups are under-represented at the top levels in institutions and it is worth considering whether this is the case in your organisation, and what structures and work practices might be contributing to this. Analysis of this will lead to more transparent and inclusive leadership. It is also worth examining where responsibility lies for equality and diversity, find out whether you have an equality and diversity adviser or team, where they sit and whether this level of support is high enough. Policies and strategies with implications for equality should be reviewed to ensure they are reinforcing the message and joined up.

Review how these policies and initiatives complement each other and consider the systems in place for supporting them and the individuals responsible for them.

2. Demonstrate the business case for equality and diversity highlighting the benefits of inclusive practices.

Review the recent ECU report: The rationale for equality and diversity¹. Consider how this applies in your institution and whether senior teams are aware of it. Translate into practice for your institution. All of the vice chancellors and principals interviewed see clear benefits to their institution in focussing on equality. Ensure that the connection between excellence and equality and diversity is clear to staff in your institution, and make senior leaders and other managers accountable for advancing diversity.

Highlight the business case for equality and diversity to senior teams in your institution.

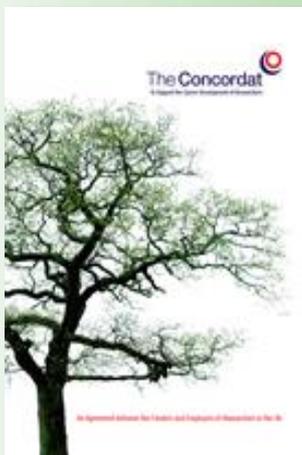
3. Review your HR Policy: annual review, appraisals, flexible working options and programmes of support for returning to work.

Appropriate HR policies that are fully utilised and understood across the organisation are essential in improving diversity. All employees have a right to request flexible working and your institution will have policies to support this. Consider how to ensure that all staff understand the options around flexible working and that the approach is both consistent and supportive. Alongside this, consider programmes to ease the transition back to work for working parents which may include interventions before, during and after leave. Review the nature of appraisals across your organisation, and ensure that they are carried out regularly and that changing equality and diversity needs alongside a holistic approach to work life balance and well-being are considered as part of this.

Update HR policies and supporting information with regard to annual review, appraisals, flexible working and return to work.

Principle 6

Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.



4. Run a positive communications campaign and make it easy for your research community to understand.

Equality and Diversity policies are generally not widely read documents and run the risk of being put on a website and never accessed. Create simpler briefing documents on the headlines of these policies based around what they actually mean for the individuals involved. Examine your institutions levels of disclosure and consider how you can improve this, as without effective disclosure it is hard to measure impact of activity and address needs. Consider how the key messages could be communicated and create a communications plan as a result. Ensure it includes statistics and information; individuals need to understand why equality and diversity must be a priority and why as managers it is important to have a full understand of the protected characteristics, the varying issues and what is already in place that they can access. Highlight to managers that it is their responsibility to communicate policies.

Communicate the key messages of current policies to your researchers

5. Create an inclusive research environment.

Create an inclusive environment within your institution examining timing of meetings etc. This might include meetings only held in core hours with agreed finishing times. Examine video and teleconference facilities and ask staff to consider who actually needs to be physically present. Vary the days of regular meetings in order that they do not disadvantage part-time staff. Lead from the top and utilise this policy for all senior management meetings.

Create an inclusive meeting policy and implement it.

¹ The rationale for equality and diversity: How vice chancellors and principals are leading change www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/rationale-equality-diversity-vice-chancellors-principal



- 6. Include unconscious bias training in staff development for all staff involved in research.** Research² has demonstrated that the beliefs and values gained from family, culture and a lifetime of experiences heavily influence how we view and evaluate others. Therefore, in order to begin to address equality and diversity it is important for individuals to have a full understanding of their unconscious bias and take steps to modify this. Aspirations tend to reflect the current norm and tackling this is therefore essential in ensuring a real sea change.

Introduce unconscious bias training for all staff at all levels in the organisation in order to create a culture that fully understands and attempts to challenge unconscious bias.

- 7. Embed every researcher counts resources in the development of principal investigators, research leaders and research staff.**

Vitae's every researcher counts training materials³ encourage conversations around equality and diversity and the challenges of managing people. They consider the realistic complexities involved and encourage managers to have open dialogue with individuals. The resources are entirely flexible and although may be run as stand along courses, appear to be most effective when built into established training and development programmes. Online modules are often used in equality and diversity training and can be an effective way of mass training a large group of people on equality and diversity rights and legislation, but they can only go so far, and the complex nature of equality and diversity may require more discussion and consideration.

Review training around equality and diversity. Weave equality and diversity training into existing and new programmes.



- 8. Inspire with positive role models from the research community.**

Positive role models within your organisation can be extremely powerful. Identify examples of role models within your organisation that have been successful despite having a protected characteristic. This may be done through word of mouth or social media. Talk to these role models about what has worked for them and use this as a way of planning for the future. Collect case studies of how it has been done well in one area of the university in order that others can access and be inspired by what is possible. Increase the profile of under-represented groups. Consider additionally role models that show good work-life balance and demonstrate how they have managed their time and workloads. Engage with the LFHE Aurora Scheme.⁴

Identify positive role models, collect case studies and increase their profile.

- 9. Establish mentoring schemes for all research staff**

Mentoring can support individuals with their equality and diversity needs, and may be transformational in terms of professional and career development. In order for a mentoring scheme to be really successful it needs high level support in order to ensure there is a relevant application process, rigour in matching and full training for mentors. Peer mentoring can be valuable for individuals to navigate the balance between work and personal life. Consider schemes for specific groups and consider involving Research Staff Associations.

Revisit current mentoring schemes and review. Implement new schemes where appropriate.

- 10. Foster and support staff networking groups for all protected characteristics.**

Peer support, realising that others are experiencing the same worries and stress can be extremely helpful in addressing the isolation that may be caused by equality and diversity issues. Examine networks within your organisation and look to foster and support staff networks and representatives to liaise with university management. Networks need to come from the bottom up, the role for the institution is to encourage and support them. Give staff networks a strong voice e.g. working parents networks, and aim to encourage networks for all protected characteristics. These may operate in a number of ways and could be physical meetings or online discussions, depending on what is most appropriate. Consider how these groups interact with other committees and groups e.g. Athena SWAN committees, Concordat Implementation, Research Staff Associations etc. This may enable better cross campus interaction and discussion and a greater sense of community belonging.

Revisit current staff network groups and review what is happening in your organisation. Aim to foster new networks where you see gaps and ensure that your institution is fully supporting them.



² Greenwald AG and Banaji MR (1995) Implicit social cognition: Attitudes, self-esteem and stereotypes. Psychological Review 102, 4 -27

³ Every Researcher Counts: Flexible resources for researcher development professionals and principal investigators www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/every-researcher-counts-equality-and-diversity-in-researcher-careers

⁴ Aurora is a woman only leadership development programme for academics and professionals. www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/programmes-events/you/aurora



Vitae, is an international programme led and managed by CRAC, a not-for-profit registered UK charity dedicated to active career learning and development. Working since 1968, when we ran our first project to support transitions of doctoral researchers to industry, Vitae has great expertise at enhancing the skills and career impact of researchers locally, within a global context.

We work in partnership with UK and international higher education institutions, research organisations, funders, and national bodies, through membership and other services, to meet society's need for high-level skills and innovation.

Vitae aims:

- Influence effective policy development and implementation relating to researcher development to
- build human capital
- Enhance higher education provision to train and develop researchers
- Empower researchers to make an impact in their careers
- Evidence the impact of professional and career development for researchers

Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK), UK HE funding bodies and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and delivers in partnership with regional Hub host universities.

Further information on our activities with HEIs, researchers and employers may be found on this website.

www.vitae.ac.uk



These ten actions were developed as part of the Vitae Every Researcher Counts project funded by RCUK, HEFCE, HEFCW, SFC and DELNI to highlight ten key actions institutions can make NOW to improve equality and diversity for all those involved in leading and supporting research at all levels in the organisation, in order to successfully turn policy into practice.

www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts

