

Every Researcher Counts

Resource D

Case study exercise 'Don't put me in a box'

D1 – Programme leader's manual

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As institutions review their policies to support a diverse research workforce, this may open up opportunities for research staff to benefit more from practices such as flexible working, career breaks and increased support with issues such as working with a disability and working in a second language. The provision of these resources can contribute to training Principal Investigators (PIs) in the diversity and equality principle of the Concordat (Principle 6), encouraging them to work with a diverse range of researcher staff within their group, where every researcher counts.

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Materials from Equality Challenge Unit's website, publications and research have informed the development of these materials and direct references are provided.

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Introduction and overview

These materials constitute a flexible resource for use in introducing diversity conversations into discussions and training with principal investigators, line managers and supervisors. It is not diversity training in its most direct form; it is a practical resource using case studies based on real people that can be used to stimulate discussion and facilitate understanding of actual issues within an individual's own work environment and their higher education institution.

The resource is aimed at experienced staff development trainers and facilitators who know their audience, the context of the higher education institution, have a strong understanding of the equality and diversity issues presented in the case studies and can draw upon other local examples to supplement the materials in this box.

What are the materials?

The resource contains materials to run up to nine 30-45 minute development and discussion sessions (either standalone or integrated into other programmes) with a practical approach to highlighting, discussing and widening understanding of managing equality and diversity issues within research groups and teams in higher education institutions.

What type of audience are they aimed at?

These materials are primarily aimed at principal investigators (or their equivalent) in research groups and the case studies are drawn from doctoral researcher, postdoctorates, fellowship, junior lecturer and lecturer backgrounds to provide differentiated levels of experience of the individuals being discussed. The scenarios and case materials are aimed at those who have responsibility for leading and managing diverse teams within research and, whilst the diversity issues covered are not exhaustive, they provide a range of different situations and individuals to provide abstract, third party observation and be able to stimulate discussion about real individuals closer to the participants' experience.

The materials could also be used with line managers of other staff within the higher education institutional environment or those researchers with responsibility for supervision of others within a higher education institution.

Who would be likely to use them?

The materials are principally (but not exclusively) provided for staff developers within a higher education institution. They are a flexible resource for staff developers to use in conjunction with other elements of their own training or for use in conjunction with equality and diversity training programmes being run by the higher education institution.

How would they fit with other materials on this subject?

There are three ways these materials could fit with existing materials and programmes running within institutions or be used by staff developers.

- Integration of the subject of equality and diversity issues into existing development programmes for Principal Investigators (or their equivalent). These sessions offer a 'pick and mix' approach to matching scenarios relevant to individual higher education institutions with a selection of appropriate case studies. They can also be used in conjunction with longer session resources provided within the Every Researcher Counts portfolio
- Staff development trainers and facilitators working in conjunction with equality and diversity officers could use the resources jointly. The materials could contribute to courses specifically around raising awareness and understanding of diversity issues
- They could be used as stand-alone (e.g. lunchtime) learning sessions to facilitate shared practice between principal investigators and greater understanding of equality and diversity issues

What preparation is required to be able to use them?

There is specific guidance given on preparing for individual sessions on the 'guide to using the materials' card.

Prior to running these sessions three resources for knowledge, help and advice are:

- Equality Challenge Unit (www.ecu.ac.uk) has a wide range of information, publications and reports to facilitate greater understanding of this subject for staff developers and the audiences they work with
- Vitae have prepared a range of resources and information in their 'Every Researcher Counts' suite of materials, case studies and resources (www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts).
- Individual higher education institution equality and diversity officers and teams for details of local data, published information and policies

Those using the materials should be experienced facilitators who can extend the understanding of audiences they work within into diversity related areas and should feel comfortable that they have the background understanding to be able to lead discussion and further understanding of the area of diversity through use of these materials.

How could institutions develop these materials further themselves?

This initial set of resources is sufficient to run up to nine sessions using cases of 30 different individuals. The scenarios are generic to leading and managing people within the research environment and, as a result, may not fit the higher education institution exactly. Likewise, not all of the case studies will be directly representative of the researchers within that higher education institution. Individual higher education institutions are therefore welcome to write additional scenarios and case studies to meet the needs more directly, where applicable (and requested to share them to increase the resources available within the sector).

Guide to using these materials

This flexible resource has been established for an experienced trainer/facilitator to run (up to) nine different sessions on the subject of diversity working with 30 case studies of individuals. It is based on one overall session plan that can be run in 30 minutes or extended to 45 minutes or be flexed to meet the needs of the staff developer and/or the participants.

There is the opportunity to further supplement the session by:

- Inviting a member of staff from one of the diverse groups considered in these materials (e.g. age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation) to share their experience of being managed and of managing themselves
- Inviting a doctoral researcher from to come and share their experience of working in an environment where their diverse needs are considered and met

In both situations above it is imperative that staff from protected groups should be invited in advance of the session to contribute. The trainer should not single out a member of staff present from a protected group as they could inadvertently 'out' them or may be making an assumption that someone has a particular protected characteristic.

- Invite a member of the equality and diversity team from the higher education institution to make themselves known to the audience and to highlight where further equality and diversity help and resources are available within the higher education institution

Prior to the session:

- Decide if you are using a 30 or 45 minute overall time for the activity
- Gather resources: there are low requirements for this session so pens and paper or flipcharts and markers will usually be sufficient for the session
- Select the scenario you are going to use and prepare your own knowledge on the subject in the context of your higher education institution (and print/copy sufficient of the scenarios for each group to have one per group)
- Identify any other resources you may need to use in the session – e.g. copies of the institution's personal development guides and forms, the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, copies of higher education institution policies on the subject you will be covering. There are no specific handouts provided with this material
- Select two to three researchers per group to use in the second part of the session. You should choose the researcher case studies to maximise the discussion and learning opportunities within the small groups and in the context of your institution. For example, if the scenario you chose is related to conference participation or international collaboration you might want to choose a broad mix of researchers that includes, but is not exclusive to, those who work flexibly and/or have caring responsibilities

In the session:

The scenarios and case studies are all written as broad examples of activities and individuals that are found within a research context. If the scenario and case study need to be changed/adapted/expanded upon to fit the needs of the participants and the higher education institution, extrapolate them using your own experience and those of the participants and flex the time according to how you are using the materials (i.e. as standalone sessions or as part of a larger programme).

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Outline session plan

The plan below shows the outline for a 30–45 minute session based on the nine scenarios and 30 cases. It is a generic plan that can be used flexibly depending upon the needs of the staff developer, the course being run, the participants and the institution.

TIMING	ACTIVITY	METHOD	NOTES
T0-T15	<p>Setting the scene/Understanding the context</p> <p>‘What happens here in our groups at our institution’</p> <p>An opportunity for participants to think about the current context they work in and share experiences.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pick the scenario you want to work with for this session from the nine included in the box. 2. Introduce the session from the institution perspective and context or link it with the other sessions you are running that this is fitting in with. 3. Ask participants to discuss the scenario in groups for seven to eight minutes and then broaden it to a wider group discussion to identify key points for the whole group. 	<p>You can use the questions provided on the scenario overview or other questions more relevant to your institution/the participants. Photocopy or print the scenarios so each group has a copy to work with.</p>
T15-T30	<p>Looking at diverse researchers in the context of the scenario from the previous session.</p> <p>‘...but what about me?’</p> <p>An opportunity for participants to think about how they would work with researchers with diverse needs in the context of the scenario they have just discussed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pick two to three cases per group from the 30 included in the box. 2. Ask the participants to consider that these researchers work in their group and to identify the things they need to consider about these individuals in light of the scenario discussed in the previous 15 minutes. 3. Ask participants to discuss the cases for seven to eight minutes and then broaden it to a wider group discussion for seven to eight minutes to identify key points for the whole group (including where there is a ‘do nothing’ response from a principal investigator perspective). 	<p>The case studies you pick for this activity can be any mix – those you feel are most relevant to the participants/institution you are running this in or those where you feel that there will be most discussion/value added.</p> <p>There will be some cases where there is a response that ‘this has no impact’ in this scenario which could be useful in generating discussions about when a principal investigator needs to act and when knowledge of the diverse needs of researchers is required.</p>

With an additional 15 minutes:

TIMING	ACTIVITY	METHOD	NOTES
T30-T45	<p>Thinking about what participants need to be equipped with in terms of knowledge and skills to manage diverse teams in a variety of settings. ‘...so, what do I need to do/be equipped with?’</p>	<p>Small group or paired discussions for five to six minutes; shared wider group discussions for five to six minutes and a facilitator led summary at the end of key points.</p>	<p>You should be prepared to direct participants to places where additional help/materials are available.</p>

Guide to the nine scenarios

The nine scenarios detailed below are broad examples of situations that principal investigators may experience and are neither exhaustive nor specific higher education institutionally related. You should draw upon your own experience/that of your institution to supplement the material provided or add to the scenarios.

NO.	SCENARIO	NOTES: WHAT ARE THE ISSUES YOU NEED TO CONSIDER
1	<p>Group Meeting</p> <p>You are arranging a meeting for all the researchers in your group to discuss progress on research. You have a very busy diary and currently work 50-60 hours each week (between the university and the time you spend in the evenings at home) and fitting in a meeting with all the people you are responsible for can be challenging – particularly taking into account holidays, conferences, the working hours of your colleagues and your own commitments – but you would like as many people in your group to be present.</p>	<p>The thinking required for this scenario is about the best:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Time ■ Frequency ■ Location ■ Length ■ Preparation required <p>To make the most of group communication, so that everyone in the group has the widest opportunity to participate and to take an active part.</p>
2	<p>Conference</p> <p>You have been invited to present a paper at an international conference and you are planning to go. It is a significant commitment in terms of time but you feel that the networking, the opportunity to present your work and profile you will build will be worth the time commitment. You would like to encourage more of your team to build their reputation within their field and would like two members of your team to attend the conference with you as you have sufficient budget to do so. You see that this would be an opportunity for intra-team relationship building as you expect you would travel together and although you might not see much of each other during the conference there would be opportunities to refer to it in subsequent conversations.</p>	<p>There is a career development sub-text to this scenario as well as a line or group management consideration.</p> <p>Questions you may ask include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Describe the type of person that would be your first choice for this type of opportunity. ■ Are there any members of your group who you would immediately dismiss as not interested in this opportunity? Why? ■ If a member of your team was unable to take up this conference opportunity how would you suggest they get the same experience/career development?
3	<p>Group strategic plan</p> <p>You have recently been awarded a significant research grant and you would like to involve your whole group in creating a strategic plan for how the research is going to be done. You are considering a 'strategic planning away day' but have not really led this type of activity yourself before.</p>	<p>This scenario presents the opportunity for a discussion on two main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The value of strategic planning with members of your research group and how a principal investigator would make the best use of the time with their group. ■ How you plan an away day and ensure that all the members of your group have the best opportunity to attend, participate and benefit from being part of it.
4	<p>Reducing the size of a department</p> <p>Given current budget restrictions you are being put under pressure to reduce the size of your department as you have not been successful in the last few grant proposals you have submitted for funding and your school/faculty is telling you that you have to reduce the size of your research group.</p>	<p>This may or may not be a realistic scenario but it gives the opportunity for the participants to examine what factors they would take into account when reducing the size of their group and how they would prioritise the reduction in staff numbers. It gives an opportunity to facilitate greater understanding of diversity related issues and headcount reduction.</p> <p>This is a scenario where you need to be up to date on current legislation, employment law and your institution's policy on reducing headcount before providing advice/facilitating a discussion amongst a key audience.</p>
5	<p>One to one meeting</p> <p>Every member of staff in your group is entitled to a performance appraisal. There is a standard process within the University to carry this out and you have heard a wider discussion about something called the Researcher Development Framework that you can use to help the researchers in your team develop their skills and careers. Several of your research group have asked for a performance appraisal and career planning session. (This situation could also be applied to supervision of doctoral Researchers).</p>	<p>In order to use this scenario you should be au fait with the Research Development Framework, your institution's policy on performance appraisal or supervision guidelines.</p> <p>The initial discussion could centre around the following three themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the role of the principal investigator in career development discussions ■ the role of the individual researcher in career development discussions ■ The available resources in the institution/Vitae to help with career development.

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Guide to the nine scenarios

NO.	SCENARIO	NOTES: WHAT ARE THE ISSUES YOU NEED TO CONSIDER
6	<p>Grant proposal</p> <p>You are currently writing a grant proposal to fund research in your area. You lead a research group of six.</p>	<p>The discussion prompted by this scenario could cover a variety of different elements, including how part-time researchers are/can be included on grant proposal bids, how principal investigators take account of the diverse needs of all their researchers whilst preparing proposal documents and how they think of their research group of six as individuals with diverse needs.</p>
7	<p>Social event</p> <p>Although you have a significant workload and already work many evenings and weekends you believe that your department would benefit from spending some social time together and you are giving some thought to organising a social event to get to know each other better (particularly as there are several new members of the group).</p>	<p>This scenario is included to generate a wider discussion about how principal investigators might lead the team management of their group and the role that social knowledge of each other plays in their overall team dynamics, as well as thinking about how you organise a social event that covers the diverse needs of a team and the role that alcohol, timing of the event and expectations play in work related social events.</p>
8	<p>International collaboration</p> <p>You have recently been approached about an international collaboration where there may be considerable work (and funds) for you and your team. There would be some travel involved to partner universities in Europe and Singapore and it would be likely to be a 12 month project.</p>	<p>These two scenarios are included to be able to explore with participants the considerations that need to be given to involving members of a group/team in collaborations that involve working internationally (and whether previous international experience is required) or cross-institution where travel, overnight stays and multi-institution, team working will be involved.</p>
9	<p>Cross-institution collaboration</p> <p>You have recently been approached about a collaboration in the UK where there may be considerable work (and funds) for you and your team. There would be regular travel involved but probably no overnight stays. It is likely to be a three-year project and you are keen to be included in the research proposal.</p>	<p>They are included so that the discussion can include the thinking of what the group/institution needs and what individuals may need and how a principal investigator might be involved in discussions with researchers on the subject of taking part in collaborations.</p>

Guide to the 30 case studies

Case study Name	Sex	Age	Disability/impairment	Gender	Trans	Race	Religion and belief	Sexual orientation	Caring Responsibilities/Flexible working	Other
Angela	Female			X				X		
Barbara	Female			X					X	
Georgia	Female		X							
Jo	Female			X	X					
Judith	Female	X								
Lisa	Female		X							
Maria	Female						X			
Mary	Female	X								
Natalia	Female					X				
Petra	Female			X					X	
Sharon	Female			X						X
Suriya	Female					X	X	X		
Susie	Female		X							
Xiao	Female					X				
Zulfa	Female			X		X			X	
Chris	Male			X					X	
Daniel	Male						X			
David	Male			X					X	
George	Male									X
James	Male			X					X	
Jim	Male		X							
Malik	Male					X	X			
Mark	Male			X					X	
Michael	Male							X		
Peter	Male	X								
Philip	Male	X								
Sadiq	Male			X					X	
Tariq	Male		X			X	X			
Theo	Male		X							
Tony	Male		X							

This list of case studies is not exhaustive. Please feel free to add case studies to this resource that reflect the diverse needs of individuals within your institution.

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Guide to the 30 case studies

There is a broad split between the diversity issues presented in these case studies between men and women to try to avoid direct stereotyping of the individuals. No performance issues have been presented through these cases although there is the scope for participants to consider a wider range of examples of work related issues that the case studies generate; all situations allow participants to read more into the case than is directly presented.

Age

The four case studies that directly cover age (Judith, Mary, Peter and Philip) aim to raise issues of:

- those members of staff who want to work beyond 60/65 within the higher education institution environment
- those who need to adapt to the changing environment within the sector
- looking for career development and promotion beyond an age where they might have expected it on a 'traditional' career path.

Impairment

The six cases that cover impairment (Georgia, Lisa, Susie, Jim, Theo and Tony) include disability (sight, hearing, mobility) and conditions such as diabetes, diagnosed autism and perceived autism to be able to facilitate a discussion where up to six cases are used to compare and contrast audience's understanding of different conditions and how they appear in the workplace and facilitate understanding about how different principal investigators manage individuals.

Gender

The eleven cases studies that cover gender (Angela, Barbara, Jo, Petra, Sharon, Zulfa, Chris, David, James, Mark and Sadiq) are provided under this heading to facilitate understanding of what are considered gender specific work and outside work roles and responsibilities. There are case studies which can be used to explore whether there are different expectations of men and women in similar scenarios but juxtaposing two similar scenarios together or to explore gender stereotypes and how they manifest themselves in situations real to the audience.

Transgender

The one case study (Jo) in this category aims to prompt discussion around how the research environment is managed to facilitate diversity for all, emphasise the importance of not 'outing' people and for the audience to share any experiences of managing transgender individuals within the research environment (or to anticipate how they might do). Given the proportion of transgender people in the work environment, it is recognised that very few principal investigators will have had experience of managing a person during or after transition.

Race

The seven case studies (George, Malik, Natalia, Suriya, Tariq, Xiao, Zulfa) that directly or indirectly cover race are provided to stimulate discussion on managing multi-racial teams of researchers and support staff. They can be used to explore the direct issues they represent or the underlying issues that might be present (or to compare to specific participant led examples). Malik and Natalia's situations also provide an opportunity to discuss what constitutes acceptable behaviours in the research environment.

Religion

The three case studies (Maria, Suriya, Daniel) that touch on religion provide the opportunity to discuss how this is relevant to how researchers are managed, as religion and belief can play an important part of peoples' day-to-day lives. The protected characteristic of religion and belief covers people who are not religious as well as those who are. Each has a religious belief that affects their behaviours, the behaviours of others towards them or a religious belief that is affecting their future career decisions. The case studies are suggested as discussion points rather than as direct examples to be managed.

Sexual orientation

One of the three case studies (Suriya) is an overseas researcher and the other two (Angela and Michael) are included to stimulate debate on the barriers faced by gay and lesbian colleagues in a research environment and how it plays out in career development.

Flexible working in relation to caring responsibilities

The eight case studies (Barbara, Chris, David, James, Mark, Petra, Sadiq, Zulfa) where caring responsibilities or flexible working is covered are split 50/50 between men and women to provide contrast and discussion points about the nature of flexible working, the responsibilities involved in caring for others (old and young) and to provide comparison and contrast between the expectations of men and women in the workplace with regard to external caring responsibilities. Whilst there are no case studies that cover those who work flexibly without caring responsibilities it has been included in the case study on Phillip.

Other

There are two other case studies included which do not directly fall into the diversity categories listed above but which are based on real researchers who have encountered either obvious or perceived prejudice in their work.

- George has a strong UK regional accent and this case study has been included to facilitate discussion around diversity based on the potential for individual prejudice based on UK origin and to open up the discussion to issues where researchers find it hard to understand each other's verbal communication based on accented spoken English
- Sharon experiences different prejudice in her work; she experiences people being rude, disrespectful of her position and excluding her from activities because she is obese. Whilst obesity is not considered an impairment under the protected characteristic of disability, it is likely that obesity will result in other conditions that are considered impairments e.g. diabetes, heart condition, mobility problems etc.