



UK Research
and Innovation

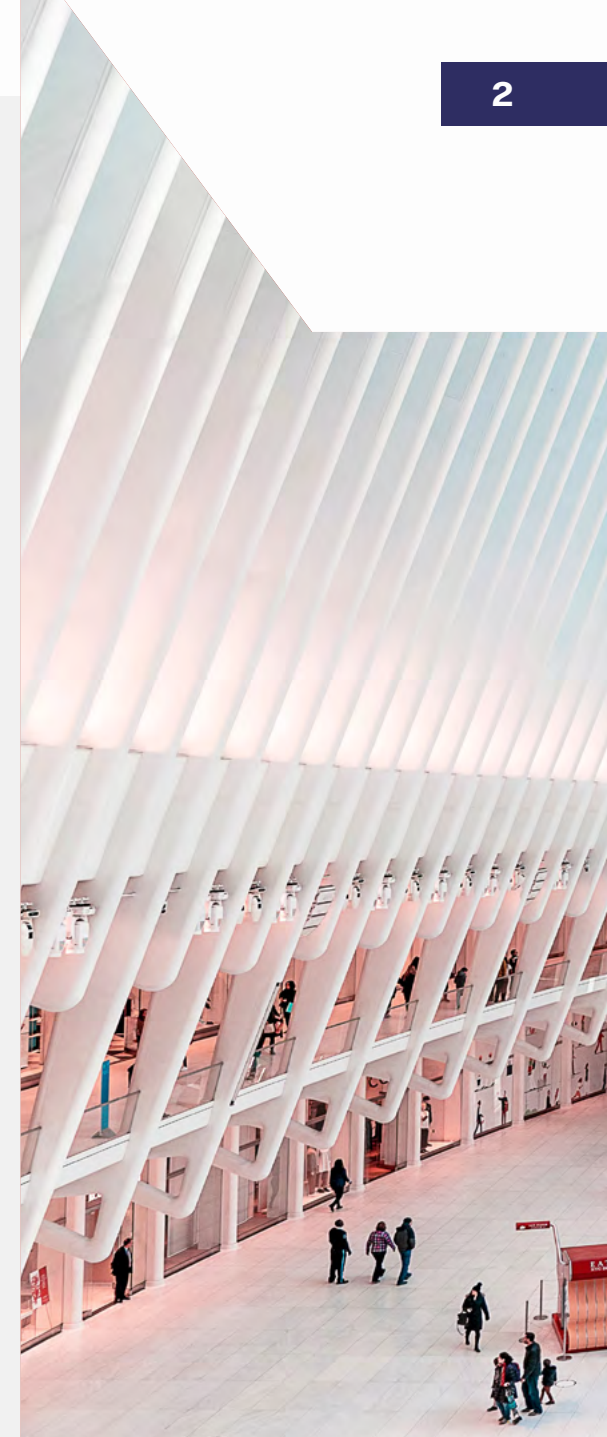
UKRI's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Research and innovation
by everyone, for everyone



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Introduction

Research and innovation create and advance knowledge and develop technologies that have the potential to transform our society. They address national and global challenges and enrich lives, delivering economic growth, and social, environmental and cultural benefits.

UKRI is the largest public investor in research and innovation in the UK. Our five-year strategy¹ sets out our ambition to “Transform Tomorrow Together”, by supporting a thriving, creative and agile research and innovation system that creates opportunities and benefits for all.

People are at the heart of this research and innovation system. The UK has a highly talented, creative, and skilled research and innovation workforce. People in many different roles – including researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, technicians, project managers, administrators - are working together to create new knowledge, solutions, technologies, products and services, and to ensure that their benefits are realised.

But we know that there is untapped talent and potential across the UK and around the world. There

are many people who are not fully able to contribute to and benefit from the research and innovation we support. This limits creativity, ideas, discoveries and innovation. To boost productivity and economic growth, meet the future needs for the research and innovation workforce² and secure the UK’s position as a world-leader in science, technology and innovation, the UK needs to attract, develop and retain a diverse pool of talented people.

This is why equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to UKRI’s vision and mission. Including and valuing a broader range of people and talent will help us achieve the extraordinary potential of research and innovation. Creating welcoming, positive and inclusive cultures where people and their ideas can flourish, will maximise the potential of this talent, so that everyone can benefit from the UK’s investments in research and innovation.

Our EDI Strategy sets out how we will use our roles as a leader, a funder and partner, and an employer to foster a more diverse and inclusive research and innovation system; a system where everyone feels included, can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from our investments in research and innovation; in short, a research and innovation system by everyone, for everyone.

“Creating welcoming, positive and inclusive cultures where people and their ideas can flourish”

Research and innovation benefits from diversity and inclusion

Creativity and problem solving are at the core of research and innovation. And the evidence is clear – diversity and inclusion have positive impacts on creativity, innovation, and performance³.

Including and valuing a diversity of approaches, skills and perspectives supports collaborative and creative problem solving, fostering novel ideas and innovations. The impact and benefit of research and innovation will be more relevant and useful for everyone when people with different expertise, experiences, approaches and ways of thinking work together.

To realise the potential of research and innovation, our ambition is for a system in which:

- everyone can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from, our investments in research and innovation
- people and ideas thrive, are supported, and encouraged
- different people, ideas, ways of thinking, skills and perspectives are valued
- everyone feels included, is heard, and respected.

“The impact and benefit of research and innovation will be more relevant and useful for everyone when people with different expertise, experiences, approaches and ways of thinking work together.”

How we developed this strategy

The foundations for this strategy are built on long-term and extensive cross-sector engagement with many people and organisations. Equality, diversity and inclusion has been an organisational priority since the formation of UKRI, building on the earlier work of our councils.

With this strategy, we have brought together our approaches and learning and challenged ourselves as part of our goal to be an efficient, effective and world-class organisation. Our strategy benefits from knowledge, research, data, and expertise from across the research and innovation sector. It builds upon the lessons we have learned, and continue to learn, about ourselves, as an organisation, and what we can do in partnership with others.

We acknowledge and appreciate those who have advised us, contributed to, supported and challenged us to work in different ways, and who have guided us to this point. We have been informed by conversations with:

- individuals, including our staff
- our staff networks

- grassroots movements
- advocacy groups
- national and international organisations.

In developing this strategy, we have:

- used the broad range of feedback and views from our communities on our draft EDI strategy to refine this strategy and develop our action plans
- deepened our understanding and gaps in our knowledge by examining our data ([UKRI diversity data](#), [UKRI gender pay gap report](#)) and [evidence reviews](#)
- reflected on recommendations and challenges in open letters, surveys, and community and stakeholder engagement activities

From the consultation on our draft EDI strategy, we heard that while many people and organisations support our ambitions, we need to be clearer about the actions that we will take. Our strategy sets out our ambition, how we will achieve this and provides a framework for the actions we will take. Our suite of action plans⁴, which are living documents, describe what we will do and the outcomes we expect to see.

“Our strategy benefits from knowledge, research, data, and expertise from across the research and innovation sector”

Our strategic objectives

Four objectives provide a framework for the actions we will take to implement this strategy. These objectives are focussed on our roles as a leader, a funder and partner, and as an employer.

1.

Foster a world-class research and innovation system, 'by everyone, for everyone'

We will catalyse and create the conditions and incentives for a thriving research and innovation system. We will use learning from ourselves and others to support our goal of being a world-class organisation that leads by example.

We commit to:

- **addressing systemic issues** by developing innovative approaches and working in partnership to maximise the potential of people and ideas in the research and innovation system
- developing **principles and incentives** to support the design and delivery of research and innovation to create opportunities and benefits for all
- **recognising, valuing and rewarding** everyone in the system and their diverse roles and contributions to high quality research and innovation, delivering benefit from the full range of talent and creativity of the research and innovation workforce.

2.

Include and support a diversity of people and ideas through our funding and partnerships

We will use our funding and our strategies, plans, policies, and processes to support the diversity of people, talent and ideas needed for world-leading research and innovation. We will involve and include a broader range of people and organisations in the design and delivery of research and innovation, to help embed research and innovation in our society and economy for the benefit of all.

We commit to:

- identifying where we need to challenge ourselves, learn from others, and take action to improve our **decision-making processes** to maximise the benefits of investments in high quality research and innovation for all
- **innovating, piloting, and investing** in interventions to support a diverse portfolio of ideas and people
- developing and investing in initiatives to **increase the diversity of people able to apply for, participate in and benefit from our investments in research and innovation**
- **including and valuing a diversity of people, experiences and perspectives** in our governance and accountability structures
- testing and embedding approaches to **inclusive dialogue and engagement** to improve research and innovation by including a wider range of people and perspectives
- working in **partnership** across the sector as part of a shared endeavour to foster a more productive research and innovation system, using our collective resources creatively, efficiently and effectively.

3.

Create a more inclusive and fair organisational culture, where everyone can contribute and participate, and feels valued and respected

Everyone who works for and with UKRI will feel included, valued, and able to contribute and participate. Our senior leaders are committed to and accountable for our progress.

We commit to:

- our senior leaders championing inclusion, and modelling inclusive actions and behaviours
- becoming a more inclusive organisation where people can flourish and that recruits, supports and retains a more diverse workforce
- creating inclusive environments where everyone feels that they belong and are supported to achieve their full potential, supporting our goal to be a world-class organisation.

4.

Advance and grow knowledge and capability to support a thriving research and innovation system by being a creative, evidence-based and evidence-informed organisation

We will experiment and monitor, to learn about ‘what works’ for diversity and inclusion, to support a creative and brilliant research and innovation system. We will develop approaches to evaluate the impact of the choices that we make and inform our future choices. We will share our data and insights and work in partnership to enhance sector knowledge and understanding, contributing to improved efficiency and effectiveness across the sector.

We commit to:

- Building our **EDI data collection and analytical capabilities** and using our data to support inclusive decision making
- **Driving and leading sustainable and efficient approaches to collecting, analysing and acting upon diversity data**, by working with the sector to create effective processes that reduce burden and enhance the sector’s ability to target interventions
- Contributing to sector knowledge and **understanding about ‘what works’ in measuring, evaluating and using EDI data to enhance research and innovation.**

Our Action Plans

Our EDI strategy acts as a framework for a suite of action plans. These action plans respond to our different roles in the research and innovation system – as a leader, an investor and partner, and as an employer.

By listening to and working with our communities and partners and building the evidence base, we will evolve these action plans and refine priorities. We will drive and catalyse systemic change, working in partnership to develop and share good practice that enhances the performance of the research and innovation system.

We will experiment and develop new approaches, piloting and implementing interventions that we will monitor, evaluate, and learn from. This approach will enable us to respond to changing needs, support a cycle of learning and improving, and grow the evidence base for ‘what works’.

We will monitor our progress against the strategy as part of our everyday business, supported by our organisational performance management framework.

“By listening to and working with our communities and partners and building the evidence base, we will evolve these action plans and refine priorities.”

Governance and accountability

Everyone who works for UKRI has a role to play in fostering a research and innovation system by everyone, for everyone. We all have a shared responsibility for creating and fostering working environments where different perspectives, skills, and experiences are valued.

The EDI strategy is part of UKRI's People, Culture and Talent portfolio. The People, Culture and Talent Change Board will oversee progress towards our ambition for a more diverse, sustainable and productive R&I system underpinned by an effective and inclusive culture. The Change Board will support us to be efficient and effective in the delivery of the strategy, connecting teams across UKRI. The Change Board reports to the UKRI Executive Committee.

This strategy is a framework that anchors and supports action plans across UKRI. Each of our action plans has an owner, who is accountable for monitoring and assessing progress. Monitoring of these action plans will enable us to manage and evaluate the performance and impact of our strategy and inform our future activities and plans.

In implementing this strategy, UKRI is accountable for the choices that we make and the actions that we take.

There is a role for every part of the system in making the UK a world-class leader in research and innovation and creating a system where people and ideas flourish. We invite everyone to contribute and play their part through collective action to make an inclusive research and innovation system a reality.

Our EDI Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed regularly. We will regularly report and share our progress, and commit to providing an update in 2024.

“There is a role for every part of the system in making the UK a world-class leader in research and innovation and creating a system where people and ideas flourish.”

Acknowledgements

Developing our first EDI strategy has drawn on expertise across UKRI and from interactions with many people, organisations and partners across the research and innovation sector.

We appreciate and value the insight, expertise and commitment from many people, which has shaped the development of our strategy.

Annexe

1. [UKRI Strategy 2022-2027](#)
2. [R&D People and Culture Strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
3. Evidence for the positive impact that diversity and inclusion have on creativity, innovation, and performance includes:
 - Bouncken, R. B. (2004). Cultural diversity in entrepreneurial teams: Findings of new ventures in Germany. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 13(4), 240-253
 - Díaz-García, C., González-Moreno, A. & Sáez-Martínez, F. J. (2013). Gender diversity within R&D teams: Its impact on radicalness of innovation. *Innovation: Management, Policy & Practice*, 15(2), 149-160
 - Nathan, M. (2014). Same difference? Minority ethnic inventors, diversity and innovation in the UK. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 15 (1). pp. 129-168
 - Nielsen MW, Alegria S, Börjeson L, Etkowitz H, Falk-Krzesinski HJ, Joshi A, Leahey E, Smith-Doerr

L, Woolley AW, Schiebinger L. (2017). *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 114(8):1740-1742. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1700616114

McKinsey Group (2018). *Delivering through Diversity*, January 2018.

Page, S. E. (2008). *The difference: how the power of diversity creates better groups, firms, schools, and societies*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.

4. Our workforce EDI plan sets out how we will build a more inclusive culture at UKRI, to offer opportunity for all, and to develop the diversity of people and thought we need to be a world-class organisation. It is also intended to ensure that UKRI attracts and retains the best people to carry out our key role in a world-class research and innovation system.

Our council-led action plans set out the tailored actions we will take across the disciplines, working in partnership with our communities, partners and stakeholders.

Accessibility

To request copies of this report in large print or in a different format, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team at UKRI:

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