

Addressing under-representation and active participation

October 2021 Update

In December 2020 we published applications and awards data by disaggregated ethnic minority groupings for principal investigators, co-investigators, fellows, and studentships.

Since we published our detailed ethnicity analysis and policy statement in December 2020, we continue to take action in addressing under-representation and inequalities through our evolving programme of work. The continual publication of our data, and engagement and dialogue with our communities enables a better understanding of where inequalities are and informs how we address the issues. Across UKRI this includes taking a long-term approach, as well as delivering a range of pilots, trials and interventions to help positively transform the system in a sustainable way. We will be publishing our EDI Strategy in autumn 2021 and will continue to develop plans and activities.

Inequalities and injustices sadly exist for certain individuals and groups, particularly those from marginalised and minoritized communities, and requires sector-wide discussion and commitment to address these. We are not the only organisation taking action and we continue to work with others across the sector as we aspire to drive consistency and transparency in data and share learning and insight. We also continue to challenge both ourselves as well as the wider system for transformative change.

Within and across UKRI, we have made progress through the following actions.

Strengthening our data collection and analysis

We continue to strive for the highest levels of transparency and hold ourselves to account on who is applying and in receipt of our funding. We remain both committed to the collection of EDI data and making this publicly available and would encourage others in the sector to do the same. We have:

- Published diversity data for funding applications and awards for 2019-20 in April 2021. In October 2021 we published our latest detailed ethnicity analysis for 2019-20, building on our previous release in December 2020. EPSRC have also published more detailed ethnicity data, based on this, including participation in peer review. We continue to develop and refine our data capabilities to reinforce our approach and minimise gaps.

This includes working across UKRI, for example with Innovate UK to review their historical EDI data on lead applicants for funding as well as their competition

applicant EDI data from September 2020-September 2021. Both are due to be published in December 2021. We will monitor and discuss the findings with our own senior leaders, with other funders and with actors in the research and innovation sector as we seek to share learning and approaches to collecting, analysing and acting upon diversity data.

- Enhanced our data collection within our new Funding Service to pilot an expanded set of EDI questions we ask of those applying. We currently collect and will continue to collect through our existing system (JeS) questions on gender, ethnicity, disability and age. In our new Funding Service these have been expanded to include sex, sexual orientation and religion.

Working across UKRI – sharing insight and learning

- We have established an internal working group across UKRI to better share learning, approaches and evidence with a specific focus on race and ethnicity. Whilst we recognise that some challenges and barriers may be more prevalent in different disciplines, we want to ensure that we build our evidence and understanding right across the research and innovation system and to identify where focused interventions may or may not be working.

Widening Participation and addressing inequalities

- Research England have worked with the Office for Students to deliver an £8m funding competition for project proposals to improve access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in postgraduate research. A competitive process appointed a panel with lived and learnt experiences relevant to the aims of the call and used a range of techniques to encourage applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates. The panel has held its first meeting and will make funding recommendations and then steer the programme over the long term.
- Councils have been working with their network of Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) to address the under-representation of ethnic minorities in studentship recruitment. Examples include:
 - ESRC, in collaboration with the [Leading Routes](#) initiative, have held a series of workshops to support DTPs and CDTs develop their EDI strategies. This has included considering all parts of the application process from pre-submission to the assessment criteria and process, exploring approaches/intervention that will increase the participation of ethnic minorities including the role of positive action.
 - BBSRC has commissioned a consortium of its DTPs, collaborating with social science researchers, to understand the end-to-end process of recruitment,

progression and retention within the doctoral programmes supported by BBSRC investment, and to develop a user-led toolkit to share good practice in minimising process bias and supporting all students in achieving their goals and career aspirations. This project will report later in 2021.

- The sharing of good practice and evidence from these approaches will be used to identify how UKRI can further support this work.
- Recognising there are real differences in the data and environments, councils are working closely with their communities, including on the use of positive action. An MRC Board/Panel Member Diversity Scheme is currently being developed to offer individuals from under-represented groups (ethnic minorities and those with disabilities or long-term conditions) the opportunity to gain experience of full participation on an MRC funding board or panel for one year at an earlier stage in their research career than usual, and in turn shape the UK's medical research portfolio. Building on the success of using positive action to increase participation of women, EPSRC is using positive action to increase participation of ethnicity minority researchers and innovators in recruitment for their Strategic Advisory Network, Strategic Advisory Teams and peer review colleges. STFC has achieved 25% ethnic diversity on its Council, with work continuing to collect more robust data on the diversity of STFC advisory bodies.
- In May 2021, AHRC published its first organisational EDI Statement and Action Plan. This acknowledged the need to collaborate within and outside of UKRI to address the longstanding systemic issues that exist, as well as developing targeted strategies to address underrepresentation in the arts and humanities. Priority actions include refreshing the Peer Review College membership to address gaps in inclusivity and bring a more diverse range of EDI perspectives into decision making; working within governance models so that all boards, panels and committees are diverse and commissioning an EDI focused review of funding policies and procedures.
- AHRC and NERC are co-funding a £0.5m interdisciplinary programme, called [Hidden histories of environmental science: Acknowledging legacies of race, social injustice and exclusion to inform the future](#). This seeks to understand and acknowledge how the future of environmental science can be informed by the past, in particular colonial history, and different cultural perceptions of environmental science. Applicants can get in touch with potential partners through our [collaboration finder](#). To help tackle specific EDI challenges facing an academic team or department, NERC's EDI call [Making environmental science equal, diverse and inclusive – UKRI](#) will provide seed-funding for projects to improve diversity in environmental sciences. In a similar piece of work, the British Geological Survey (BGS) has established a working group to explore its heritage and racial legacy. This includes looking at the way BGS phrases information around old data holdings (which include personal

reports and diaries) and developing protocols for data that is held from ex-colonies, as well as capturing and sharing good practice for overseas working, especially in ex-colonies.

- UKRI has signed up to participate in the 10,000 Black Interns initiative to help transform who works in the research and innovation sector. We are working with the Foundation running the programme to attract applicants interested in research and innovation. The recruitment process will take place in autumn 2021, with the aim for successful interns to take up their placements in summer 2022.
- Innovate UK's Young Innovators programme encourages young people (aged 18-30) to develop their innovative business ideas. By 2023 the programme will have provided support for 200 award winners and created new inspirational role models from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

Engagement and listening to our community

- Engaging and listening to our community is a key strand of our programme of work in bringing people closer to our decision-making, being fair and inclusive in our approach and building trust by listening and valuing peoples' experiences and insights. This requires care and an ethical approach and UKRI is developing a programme of work to create the conditions for enabling equitable and safe dialogues – not only for UKRI, but for the whole sector. We expect to announce more about this work in Autumn 2021.

UKRI continues to engage proactively with its communities including:

- NERC have convened a series of thematic roundtables with a range of organisations and researchers at different career stages, including early and late career researchers. These focused on the barriers and subsequent actions that can be taken to embed equity, diversity and inclusion within the environmental sciences. A full copy of the outputs from those discussions is available [here](#).
- EDI is a key priority in STFC's People Plan. STFC is engaging with its Council to develop a wider EDI action plan and has set up an EDI Steering Group to review and take forward activities at an STFC and UKRI level. This builds upon STFC's well-established Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff network, which meets periodically with the Executive Chair to discuss action to address EDI within STFC.
- EPSRC are undertaking additional analysis to better understand the disparity of gender and race in its funding portfolio and has been engaging with its community on the findings. EPSRC is currently analysing over 1,000 responses to our "have your say" survey on race and ethnicity. More information is available [here](#).

- UKRI has recently established a Racial Inclusion and Striving for Equity (RISE) Network as part of efforts to increase staff engagement through staff networks. These networks are now agreeing priorities for 2021-22 which include supporting and strengthening the efforts of Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic activities working across UKRI and encouraging members to join the network, making it relevant, useful and accessible to all. Specifically, the RISE network sees an opportunity to work closely with STFC and pilot 9 initiatives that start to address key racial issues visible in STFC, with the aim of wider roll-out across UKRI if successful. The pilot will test initiatives, build on those that are successful and learn from any failures.