

UK Research and Innovation

Paper: 19-15
UKRI EDI External Advisory Group
Author: [REDACTED]

Minutes of the eighth meeting of the UK Research and Innovation External Advisory Group for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion held on 7th October 2019, London.

Attendees	
Jennifer Rubin (Chair)	Karen Salt
Dina Belluigi (by VC)	Eugene Oteng-Ntim
Simon McKeown	Claire Murray
Giovanni Razzu	Wendy Loretto
Zamila Bunglawala	
UKRI attendees	
[REDACTED] (Secretariat)	Sarbani Banerjee
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] (item 4)
[REDACTED] (item 5)	[REDACTED] (item 7)
Apologies	
Tom Welton	Rosanna Duncan

1. Welcome and Introductions

[REDACTED] welcomed attendees to the eighth meeting of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) External Advisory Group (EAG) and fifth meeting in 2019. Apologies were noted from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] informed members that, since the last meeting, she had been successfully appointed, through an open recruitment process, as the Head of EDI for UKRI Strategy and subsequently appointed as the acting deputy director of culture and environment. This remit would cover areas including equality, diversity and inclusion, research culture, open access, peer review, research integrity and ethics.

2. Minutes from last meeting and actions

Members agreed the minutes without amendment and the actions were noted as complete.

3. UKRI governance for equality, diversity and inclusion

[REDACTED] informed members that for UKRI to deliver on the agreed strategy and associated programme of work, the organisation needed to ensure it had an effective way of, not only understanding the external factors across the landscape, but also to engage and draw on the expertise internally within UKRI. UKRI would be establishing a new governance arrangement which would provide clear accountability and steerage to enable UKRI to develop a centrally coordinated approach to EDI policies and processes, and for supporting and delivering EDI across UKRI.

In summary, three new groups would be established in addition to the EAG:

- Internal Programme Board - chaired by Senior Responsible Officer [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] supporting the SRO's decision making and overseeing the overall programme and strategy by providing challenge and approvals relating to the programme.
- Implementation Group – The EDI Implementation Group bringing together the councils to support the development of EDI policy, making recommendations to the Internal EDI Programme Board in line with the strategy.
- HR led network – established and managed by HR and ensuring a strong employee voice within policy development.

In addition to the internal governance, UKRI planned to appoint a small number of EAG 'ambassadors' to enable UKRI to draw upon additional expertise across the breadth of the landscape whilst keeping the core EAG focussed and manageable.

Members were supportive of the new governance arrangement noting that it was reassuring that the new structure would provide additional resource and transparency. It would also be important to ensure operational and strategic elements of the structure were well integrated. It was suggested that in addition to appointing ambassadors, UKRI might wish to consider offering sabbaticals which in turn would send a strong message that the organisation is taking EDI seriously.

Members noted that the new governance arrangement was expected to be in place by the end of the year and were supportive of UKRI arranging a collective 'meet and greet' of all groups, including the EAG, around the time of their next meeting in December.

4. UKRI EDI Communications Plan 2019

[REDACTED] introduced [REDACTED] as the head of communications theme lead for EDI on behalf of UKRI working closely with UKRI Strategy, BEIS comms and the UKRI constituent parts. [REDACTED] presented a set of communication objectives and approach, which will:

- drive culture change
- be sensitive to, and capitalise on the wider operating context
- tell one UKRI EDI story in diverse ways
- bring external influencers into the fold and garner their support for our activities
- be timely but prepared
- walk the talk – cement internal processes.

Overall members were supportive of the approach noting that that UKRI may wish to consider behavioural change alongside cultural change. In addition, members discussed a need for clear messaging around data particularly noting that it would be beneficial to acknowledge any gaps, recognising we are on a journey and want to get this right.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] discussed accessibility suggesting UKRI should ensure this is considered in both the design of the forthcoming launch event as well as written materials.

Members welcomed the update on the approach and offered to promote the EDI work when they are out and about and to their networks.

5. UKRI data and analysis

[REDACTED] informed members that since the update at the last meeting, the data set had been reconstructed in order to apply exclusions which affected four Councils' data (BBSRC, EPSRC, MRC and NERC). Members noted that once the data was ready, it would be published alongside the EDI launch material, in interactive charts in tableau as well as CSV files.

It was acknowledged that with the recent Science and Technology Committee pre-inquiry request, some of the data would now be published as part of the response ahead of original publication schedule.

Members agreed that intersectionality is important and should be considered as part of the longer-term plan for EDI data and analysis.

6. Update on UKRI's bullying and harassment policy

██████████ informed member that following significant engagement externally with key stakeholders including the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Office for Students (OfS), other funders and Universities UK (UUK) as well as internally with employees, UKRI had developed a position statement on bullying and harassment which would sit alongside the evidence review, shortly to be published.

Members recommended UKRI continue to work with other funders to make it accessible and noted a three-year programme of work would sit alongside the statement, including an assurance programme.

It was noted that UKRI was also working with key partners on safeguarding within an international and domestic context and an update on this work had been provided to the committee as part of the papers. The safeguarding policy related to the avoidance of harm both domestically and internationally in relation to external relationships while bullying and harassment was predominately focussed on behaviours within research organisations. However, the two teams were working together closely to ensure a coordinated approach and joint development of some elements such as assurance mechanisms.

Action: UKRI Strategy to share the bullying and harassment position statement and comms lines with the EAG.

7. UKRI as an employer

██████████ provided an overview of the context for ████████ team's work, noting that across UKRI there are a total of nearly 8,000 staff with 5,000 working in institutes and centres. Work was underway to collect data on UKRI staff establishing two years of snapshot data. However, disclosure rates have been low, particularly around disability, highlighting work is needed to address this.

In addition, members noted:

- UKRI's second gender pay gap report will be published in December.
- HR are in the process of establishing a baseline of the internal reporting of bullying and harassment and further work would be undertaken to establish a baseline on EDI activities and processes more broadly.

Members discussed the use of equality impact assessments in the context of recruitment for particular posts, noting that for some roles required working in isolated conditions or late/during the night. In addition, it was recognised that reward and recognition of staff can be in different forms e.g. not necessarily financial. The L'Oreal Women in Science award was acknowledged as an example of a practical way to provide support which could be used flexibly where needed by award holders e.g. childcare support.

██████████ highlighted that she was in the process of appointing a small team to deliver the EDI work, which would closely align with the wider EDI strategy, and agreed to present a more detailed plan at a future meeting.

8. Impact of the hostile environment and related policy-mismatches on international research

██████████ brought to the attention of the EAG the issue of travel visas being denied for various research collaborations despite agreed funding agreements being in place.

██████████ informed members that work was underway to understand where the challenges are to seek to address this. It was noted that the current permanent secretary was taking this issue very

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seriously and UKRI had developed a toolkit for overseas researchers to support the application process.

Action: [REDACTED] agreed to provide EAG with the toolkit and a short-written summary of what action UKRI was taking for their information.

7. AOB

Forthcoming communications: It was noted that there was a lot of work currently underway and it would be beneficial to ensure members remain sighted and informed for when they are 'out and about' engaging with their networks.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 11th December 2019.