



**UK Research
and Innovation**

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Racial Inclusion and Striving for Equity (RISE) Staff Network Terms of Reference

**RISE network leadership group
June 2026**

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this Network is creating a collaborative platform that supports Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic colleagues in UKRI to share thoughts, experiences, ideas and solutions and raises awareness that helps us all contribute towards a more inclusive workplace. The network is a community that represents minority ethnic groups, and acknowledges that open and honest conversations regarding ethnicity, can be uncomfortable. Making UKRI a place where everyone can feel comfortable being who they are regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity or culture.

Vision and Mission

Our vision for UKRI and beyond is for a vibrant and progressive future where race, nationality, ethnicity and/or culture does not define any person. We want to create an era of change; creating an enabling and supportive work environment providing equal opportunity for everyone to participate, be who they are and be powerful together.

Our mission is for UKRI to be a leading research and innovation organisation that strongly reflects and respects the diversity of our ethnic workforce. We believe that the contributions of everyone makes and strengthens UKRI. We champion fairness, challenge discrimination and pioneer innovative solutions to empower racial inclusion and strive for equity in the workplace.

Objectives

The objectives of the network are to:

- Continue to support and strengthen the efforts of the Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic activities across UKRI
- Establish and promote the visibility of the network
- Create a safe environment where people feel empowered to have uncomfortable conversations
- Encourage members to join the network, making it relevant, useful and accessible to all
- Engage with and support the development of the new UKRI Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and key priorities
- Work alongside the other networks to address all the above key priorities from the intersectionality lens to pursue inclusivity

Accountability

The RISE network sits within the UKRI staff networks, supported by the UKRI EDI workforce team.

Remit & core responsibilities

Network Scope

The scope of the network is to oversee the development and delivery of the RISE staff network.

Remit

The network is a group of colleagues, with a shared protected characteristic and/or aligned commitment that come together to support each other and support UKRI.

We are not meant to act as subject matter experts in EDI and do not replace the role of Trade Unions representatives.

Core Responsibilities

The network is responsible for providing a safe space for employees to have real, honest conversations on work-life experience, highlighting both areas for improvement and areas of success. To help develop a work environment and culture where colleagues feel safe, valued, and able to bring their whole selves to work.

This includes:

- Direction setting for the network
- Oversight for the network
- Overall coherence of the networks activities to fulfil its vision and mission and achieve its objectives
- Leading of cultural change within UKRI
- Influencing and alignment with overarching UKRI EDI strategy, where required
- Work with the Workforce EDI team and others to identify, generate and offer solutions to real or perceived obstacles so members can achieve their full potential
- Oversight of budget spend for network
- Regular network leadership and membership team meetings

Outputs

The network will report out to the workforce EDI team (inform only) on a monthly/quarterly basis.

Updates from the network meetings will be shared with the wider networks and the workforce EDI teams through Chair of Chair meetings and other routes as appropriate.

Composition

Network Members

The network is open to anybody employed by UKRI. Colleagues can join by submitting the membership form via the RISE Network Web Page on the Source.

Leadership Team

The network has a leadership team of voluntary members of the network itself, who have management, advisory and decision-making responsibility (Annex B). The leadership team should be limited in size to between 5 and 10 members. Specialists will be invited to the group as required for consultation.

Executive Sponsor(s)

The network has voluntary executive sponsor/s (Annex D) from among senior staff who act as champions by:

- Learning and better understanding experiences and perspectives within the organisation
- Providing a sounding board and advice on network business
- Connecting and 'opening the door' for the networks with others
- Advocating on behalf of the network on its priorities, goals and any events

Term of Office

The network will be in place indefinitely. The Chairs role may fluctuate over time but is expected to be held by anyone of UKRI.

Members of the group:

- Are expected to be employees of UKRI.
- Should commit to membership of the group for a period no less than 2 years.
- Should consult with their line manager in advance of accepting
- Should agree with their line manager regarding the amount of time they can dedicate to this work. This should be a minimum of one to two days a month.

Optional Members:

- Invited Specialists will be invited to meetings as required.

Mode of Working

Decisions

The leadership team must be open and transparent and agree decisions by majority if they are to be considered valid and binding.

Frequency of Meetings

The Leadership team meets a minimum of once a month to progress actions and plan for the future, unless business requires otherwise. Where required, the group may convene exceptionally at other times throughout the year, to expedite key decisions. Attendance is voluntary but for all Leadership members 80% of annually attendance is required. Meetings are accessible and hosted on Zoom. Team members unable to attend should notify the secretary by email in advance.

At each meeting the leadership team will review any relevant documentation to support the agenda item discussions. Leadership team members will receive the documentation electronically 5 working days in advance and must make sure to read it prior to attending the meeting. A model agenda is at Annex A.

Resignations

In the case of a leadership member resigning, they should provide no less than six weeks' notice and should prepare a written and verbal handover to their successor.

Review

This document will be reviewed annually by the Leadership Team in line with the needs of the emerging priorities for the network and UKRI requirements.

Annex A: Model Agenda

[Insert: Meeting Name]
[Insert: Meeting Date & Time]
[Insert: Meeting Chair]
[Insert: Meeting Location]

Agenda

Item	Outcome	Who
Welcome and Apologies		Chair
Updates • Comms • RISE (STFC) • RISE (NERC)		All
Activities/discussion • Events • Hot topic(s) • Decision(s)		All
Action Log • Open actions from previous meeting		All
AOB		All

[Insert link to Action log]

Annex B: Leadership Team - Individual Responsibilities

The Chair's duties are: leading the strategic direction of the network; representing the network at all staff networks Chairs' meetings; being the main point of contact for UKRI consultations, for example with HR and central EDI Team; liaising between the network and its executive sponsors and representing the network to external stakeholders.

The Secretary's duties are: supporting the Chair(s) in their duties, preparing agendas in liaison with the chair, taking minutes of monthly meetings and ensuring that agreed actions are followed up, maintaining effective records and administration including organising the election

The Communication Lead duties are: planning and delivering communications about issues and network activities, including liaising with the rest of the Leadership team, UKRI Internal Comms, UKRI Events, internal and external speakers as required.

The Events Lead duties are: planning, setting up and delivering network events for members including liaising with the rest of the Leadership team, UKRI Internal Comms, UKRI Events, internal and external speakers as required.

The Membership Lead duties are: managing the RISE inbox, welcoming new members via email, responding to member's queries, engaging with members through Yammer, and growing the membership base in collaboration with the rest of the Leadership Team.

The Policy/data Lead duties are: reviewing policy with a network lens and offering suggestions for improvement in collaboration with the rest of the Leadership Team. Collecting, analysing and disseminating data for sharing within and beyond the RISE and UKRI communities.

The HR Lead duties are: supporting the network by providing expert advice on the employee life cycle, contributing to the growth of the leadership team, network and organisation.

There are without portfolio roles, which includes any activities, commitments and new matters which may rise in due course.

Annex C: Leadership Team - Election Process

Election for the new leadership team is coordinated by the outgoing network Leadership Team. Any person can put themselves forward for any leadership team role. The opportunity to become a leadership team member will be promoted to all members and employees across UKRI. Candidates are required to prepare short bios which are collated and circulated to all members by the current secretary. Members are then given two weeks to vote through an anonymized survey. The Leadership Team then counts the votes and announces the new leadership team members. Parity of votes for one or more roles means that the role will be shared (e.g Co-Chairs). The Election Process (Proposals, survey and handover process) will be reviewed every two years and will first give consideration to the leadership team rolling agreements.

Each leadership team member leaving their leadership role as a result of the election should prepare a written and in person handover to their successor within one month of leaving their position.

When exceptional circumstances occur for example as the below scenarios, then a streamlined process will be put in place to cover the roles.

- A leadership team member steps down, leaves UKRI or dies
- Members raise serious concerns regarding the conduct of any of the leadership team members

Annex D: Executive Sponsor(s)

The network has executive sponsors from among senior staff. It is a voluntary role. In case a sponsor(s) steps down, it is the UKRI Leadership Team (EDI Team) responsibility in consultation with the RISE network Leadership Team to find a replacement. The network Chair should coordinate the team's efforts to approach selected senior staff; the Chair can delegate this work to another leadership team member.

An executive sponsor of RISE staff network:

- Serves as a champion of the group by advocating for our mission at senior UKRI level and inspiring our network activity
- Is a mentor to the network, acting as a sounding board with advice and help with building cases etc. Supports the group through active communication and regular visibility. Provides advice and counsel to guide the network's development
- Meets with the chair/s of the Network once a quarter
- Acts as an inclusive role model
- Gives strategic direction to align with the UKRI's business strategy and aims whilst providing an insight into the broader UKRI picture
- Connects to a broad network of strategic, senior relationships, and provides the network with visibility and access to decision making environments
- Liaises with the executive team and represents views and issues highlighted at this level
- Helps actively to identify and overcome obstacles and resistance to progress of the network's vision and mission within the organisation using personal skills and position of influence
- Helps to extend the reach of the network
- Lends support for our campaigns and events, including providing content and participating in events.