



Minutes of the 13th meeting of the UK Research and Innovation External Advisory Group for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion held on 7 October 2020 via Zoom

EAG Attendees	
Jennifer Rubin (Chair)	Karen Salt (Deputy Chair)
Rosanna Duncan	Eugene Oteng-Ntim
Dina Belluigi	Giovanni Razzu
Simon McKeown	Tom Welton
Claire Murray	Wendy Loretto
Rosanna Duncan	Zamila Bunglawala
UKRI Attendees	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] (Secretariat)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser, UKRI CEO
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Apologies	
Zabeen Hirji	

1. Welcome

[REDACTED] welcomed attendees to the meeting. EAG members were joined by Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser for an introductory session. [REDACTED] provided opening remarks and an introduction to the EAG. She noted that the membership is varied in career stage and sector and that the group has been invaluable in providing support and challenge to UKRI's thinking on equality, diversity and inclusion through its diverse perspectives. The group has interacted with different parts of UKRI, and for instance been an asset in conversations around governance.

2. Introductory session with Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser

Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser was invited to provide introductory remarks on her vision for diversity and inclusion in the research and system.

Dame Ottoline welcomed the opportunity to meet with the members and, highlighted that EDI is of great personal importance, with long-standing interest and involvement in this area. She noted that in some areas progress has been made but in a lot of areas, this is not the case. This is therefore a critical moment for the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, coinciding with her taking up the role as CEO of the major UK funder of research and innovation.

She was interested in expanding the narrative beyond underrepresentation specifically and moving towards a system that proactively values difference and recognises it as essential to a successful research and innovation system, capable of solving complex problems. She set out that the intention is not to downplay extraordinary injustices or existing work but to recognise that we need to move

further and faster.

She further commented on the fact that the sector currently defines 'excellence' in a narrow way, for example, assessment systems are formulaic and fail to capture the diversity of people's contributions.

Dame Ottoline invited the EAG to discuss and share their thoughts on how to 'shift the narrative to open the door wider and think more broadly', i.e. how to shift the current narrative towards creating an inclusive narrative, which goes beyond exclusion and narrow definitions of excellence.

██████████ invited members to discuss and comment on Dame Ottoline's presentation.

Members welcomed the philosophy and ethos of the vision set out by the CEO. They noted the already existing shift within universities to thinking about EDI in such broader ways, as well as relevant previous work on EDI data at the Cabinet Office.

Members discussed how to get away from the focus on individual research superstars. The focus on diversity within the Future Leaders Fellowship was noted as a positive example and we need to consider other broader routes for identifying future leaders.

The discussion further focussed on how to make high-quality, inclusive decision making. Members noted that the current equality of opportunity narrative had proven not to work, with the system currently perpetuating patterns of funding, with little diversity emerging.

Responding directly to Dame Ottoline's outlined vision, members commented that the proposed solution seemed too simple for the complexity of the system, which is built to be structurally exclusionary and is overly fixated on narrow definitions of excellence. Members discussed different ways that might be used to embed Dame Ottoline's outlined vision and narrative, considering the routes researchers access funding, types of projects proposed and how we work with our whole community as well as who makes up our various committees, the criteria used, how the criteria has been established and who has provided input to design the call.

Dame Ottoline was keen to continue engagement with EAG members and invited comments and challenges.

Action 1: EAG to provide further reflections and suggestions through a formal response to the questions posed by Dame Ottoline.

Action 2: Invite Dame Ottoline to a future meeting of the EAG.

3. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted without comment.

Update on Action 1 to invite the UKRI HR team to an upcoming meeting of the EAG to update on internal EDI work: ██████████ informed members that an item on the EDI HR vision and plans will be discussed at the December 2020 EAG meeting.

Update on Action 2 to share relevant grant terms and conditions with the group and to follow up about a possible joint statement (Following ██████████ presentation about the long-term impact of Covid-19 on researchers in high-risk groups):

Members were informed that the costed grant extensions process requires EDI to be embedded in the governance of the process. Further, ██████████ updated on the progress on costed grant extensions noting that a large proportion of research organisations seeking costed grant extensions are embedding EDI, and that those that do not match the expected quality are expected to make amendments following steers from UKRI and demonstrate that they will meet those expectations.

4. Results from detailed ethnicity analysis and future data publication plans

██████████ introduced the item, explaining that UKRI intends to publish additional ethnicity data with results disaggregated by ethnicity category in autumn 2020, and acknowledged the importance of the constructive challenge from the EAG on publication of this type of data.

The data were presented to members. Key findings include that those from ethnic minorities form the largest share of applicants and awardees as Co-Investigators (CIs), relative to Principal Investigators

(PIs) and Fellows. Within ethnic minorities, applicants from the Asian ethnic groups form the largest share, followed by applicants from Mixed and Black ethnic groups. The share of PIs from Black and Bangladeshi ethnicity is below their labour market and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) estimates of staff share. The share of PIs and researchers from Chinese ethnicity is greater than their labour market share, but in line with the HESA staff share.

For recipients of doctoral studentships, UKRI does not have ethnicity information for almost 30% of awardees. As a result, our understanding of the ethnicity composition of studentship recipients is incomplete. Students from Asian ethnic groups are the largest group within the ethnic minority group, followed by those from the Mixed and Black ethnic groups.

Members queried whether similar analysis will be conducted with disability data. The UKRI team acknowledged that intersectional analysis is an important future priority and forthcoming work will include disability, despite the challenge presented by low numbers of awardees disclosing a disability in the current dataset.

Members further queried if there would be an action plan associated with this data publication. There was also a query on the ONS data used as a benchmark and whether employment and activity rates were used.

Action 3: UKRI Analysis team to follow up on more information on ONS data benchmark (actioned via correspondence)

5. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. AOB

The Chair thanked members for their contributions in the meeting.

[REDACTED] notified members of plans for recruitment for new membership of the EAG, noting she would be keen for current members to be involved in the process. As a first step, there are plans to appoint a new interim external chair for the EAG as soon as possible.

The Chair thanked [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] work and efforts managing the secretariat for the EAG and notified members that [REDACTED] will now be handing this role over to [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] will be attending the next EAG meeting due to take place on 2nd of December 2020. Briefings will be provided for members ahead of this discussion.

Action 4: Members requested further information and update on UKRI's engagement with [REDACTED]

There was no further business.