

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

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Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is an increasingly significant topic, and all individuals have a responsibility for implementing EDI working practices. It is important to first understand the definition of each term.

Equality is treating individuals the same and providing them with the same resources or opportunities. However, equality and equity are not the same things. Equity acknowledges that each individual has different circumstances and so there is a requirement to provide the resources based on individual needs. An example of this would be to give everyone the same pair of shoes which would achieve equality. But to achieve equity, we would need to give everyone a pair of shoes that *fits*.



Equality is everyone getting a pair of shoes.



Diversity is everyone getting a different type of shoe.



Equity is everyone getting a pair of shoes that fits.



Acceptance is understanding we all wear different kinds of shoes.



Belonging is wearing the shoes you want without fear of judgment.

Diversity means to foster an environment that has a wide range of backgrounds where each person's unique differences and mindsets will help to promote and encourage creativity and innovation.

Inclusivity ensures each individual feels welcome, safe, and valued regardless of their background and characteristics. It is important to note that by having a diverse group, this does not automatically mean we are 'inclusive'. We can only create an inclusive environment once we have identified our unconscious biases and how to manage them.

New beginnings bring us an opportunity to re-assess and prioritise EDI efforts to ensure all individuals feel respected, appreciated, and celebrated no matter what their background or identity is. By taking a proactive approach to EDI, organizations can create a culture that values diversity and empowers individuals to reach their full potential. One such example, is the ongoing work with the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS). The EDI working group was launched in August 2022, and the priority for this year, 2023, is to raise awareness of different backgrounds of individuals who work in Biomedical Science, Pathology, and healthcare and to help educate everyone on how we can be supportive and inclusive. This must be a collective effort where students, academics and professional colleagues work together in partnership to establish effective EDI working practices.

Individuals suffering from discrimination are not reporting to employers as they have no confidence that issues will be dealt with. As a consequence, they resign and leave their roles to work 2-3 other jobs to make ends meet which in turn has a huge impact on health and wellbeing. It is important to look at the policies in place with comprehensive monitoring on pay gaps, recruitment, retention and establish targets to ensure a safe space for everyone to thrive.

How can we educate ourselves and help to work towards a safe, inclusive work environment?

- Familiarise yourself with the Equality Act 2010 which is a legal framework that protects people from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Read books, articles and research studies on EDI topics including unconscious bias, cultural competency, and intersectionality. This will give you a deeper understanding of the issues and help you to see things from different perspectives.
- Participate in training and workshops as this will give you the opportunity to learn from experts and to share your experience with others.
- Talk to colleagues and other people in your network about EDI and actively seek out diverse perspectives. Ask questions, listen to others, and engage in open and honest conversations about these important topics.
- Be aware of your biases and be willing to learn. Take time to reflect on your own beliefs, attitudes, and biases, and how they might impact your interactions with others. This can be a difficult but important step in personal growth and self-awareness.
- Develop networks and allyship in the workplace to challenge unconscious bias and educate others about lived experiences of those who are underrepresented.
- Promote open and inclusive language and encourage active participation in EDI initiatives and offer your support. This can include participating in working groups, volunteering for committees, or taking on leadership roles in EDI projects.

Representation matters-you cannot be what you cannot see! A sense of belonging has a positive impact on motivation, academic success, personal and professional development. We need to support advocacy for individuals to be seen and heard. Implementing EDI requires ongoing effort and commitment, but we must develop an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome as this is how we can reap the benefits of a diverse workforce and bring new ideas and opportunities.