



Starter Steps and Quick Wins

9th February 2015

Introduction

Initiating a diversity, equality and inclusion programme can be daunting due to the complex nature of the issues around diversity and resource intensive nature of many associated activities. Becoming a fully diverse and inclusive organisation is a long journey that requires strategic planning; there is no quick fix or 'magic bullet'. However, every journey begins with the first step and there are many actions that are relatively simple to initiate, or where the practice of others can be copied.

With the help of member bodies the Science Council has generated a list of ideas to help professional bodies and learned societies get started on their diversity journey. Not all of the ideas will be appropriate for every organisation but it is hoped that they will spark ideas, and most importantly, action.

The list is organised by common areas of activity and ideas for additions are welcomed.

Nicola Hannam Director of Development
n.hannam@sciencecouncil.org

Governance

- Write to all committees and groups asking them to review the diversity of their membership and whether there are ways in which they can increase their diversity.
- Encourage committees and groups to advertise vacancies as widely as possible.
- Where the candidate pool lacks diversity, consider how potential future candidates might be nurtured through the organisations other committees and activities.
- Provide informal opportunities for networking with future candidates and facilitate the development of mentoring relationships.
- Ask each committee to identify an individual to act as a diversity champion by helping the committee to ensure consideration of diversity issues is embedded in all its work.
- Amend committee terms of reference to include a reminder to consider diversity issues within its work and its appointments.
- Ensure nomination committees themselves have a diverse make up.
- Include consideration of diversity implications within all proposals for new projects.
- Include an introduction to diversity issues within the trustee induction.
- Provide unconscious bias awareness training for board members.

Membership and registration

- If your organisation offers a fee break, or reduction, for circumstances such as maternity/paternity leave, period of unemployment, unable to work due to ill health etc. consider how well this support is promoted.
Example forms for offering temporary fee reductions: <http://www.bcs.org/category/10493>
- Signpost to external sources of support e.g. the Daphne Jackson Trust.
- Check that membership related material profiles a diverse range of individuals
- Host a one-off event for underrepresented members, providing networking opportunities and the potential for spin-out networking groups.
- Provide unconscious bias awareness training for membership/registration assessors.

Communications

- Promote the organisation's commitment to diversity through its communication channels.
- Include a diversity, equality and inclusion statement on the website.
- Display the signed Declaration on Diversity, or other sign of commitment, in a prominent office position.
- Audit website and publication images to ensure there is a diverse mix of individuals. Highlight this as an area to consider when adding new content.
- Review the accessibility of the website e.g. is there an option to increase text size, is it compatible with screen readers.
- Review event and project literature to ensure it appeals to all groups – for example refraining from using sports analogies, which typically appeal to a male audience.
- Signal your commitment to diversity by using your website, or social media, to promote initiatives such as International Women's Day, World Mental Health Day etc. A list is available at: <http://www.enei.org.uk/pages/diversity-dates-and-guides.html>
- Support wider initiatives such as the Department for Education's Your Life campaign, <http://www.yourlife.org.uk/>, or Black History Month.
- When invited to speak check the programme for diversity balance and question if more can be done to achieve balance.
- Use speaking engagements as an opportunity to promote the importance of equality and valuing difference.

Examinations or assessments

- Offer additional time allowance or a scribe for individuals with dyslexia, dyspraxia, physical disabilities etc.
- Offer large print versions of papers or screen reading options.

Accreditation

- Ask education institutions to report on actions taken to support diversity and inclusion.

Conferences, events and meetings

- Review the accessibility of your venues and pre-empt adaptations that may be required.
- Offer access assistance for events e.g. sign language translation.
- Hold the majority of sessions within core hours to make it easier for those with caring responsibilities to attend.
- Audit whether your events are often held on the same day of the week and potentially exclude part-time workers.
- Provide sufficient notice of meetings to allow individuals to make arrangements for childcare etc.
- Consider including provision for grants to cover childcare etc. within conference budgets.
- Consider offering crèche facilities
- Ask event organisers to report on their efforts to support diversity and challenge plans for homogenous panels.
- Consider running careers fairs tailored to the needs of returners and career changers.
- Consider whether different event formats might assist inclusion e.g. ensuring some social events cater for those that do not drink alcohol; including some events with facilitated networking to support mixing between groups.

Prizes/awards

- If the nomination pool lacks diversity consider:
 - Introducing new awards to recognise other groups e.g. early career researchers, outreach experts.
 - Advertising the awards through new networks including those reaching specific groups e.g. <http://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/>, <http://www.afbe.org.uk/>

Employment

- Promote the organisation's commitment to diversity when recruiting.

- Consider phraseology used in job vacancy adverts avoiding words that might have associated stereotypes <http://tinyurl.com/cqwbq17> e.g. BT attracted a much greater number of female applicants after retitling its school leavers scheme.
- When appropriate, highlight openness to job share, flexible hours or part-time candidates.
- Reframe flexible working so that the assumption is that all roles can have some degree of flexibility.
- Sign up to offer employees childcare vouchers through a salary sacrifice scheme. [N.B. from Aug 2015 entitlements change]
- Introduce exit interviews to identify unintended barriers.
- Use open recruitment for work experience placements and internships
- Pay interns a living wage.