



Guide for Diversity Champions

The Science Council's Declaration on Diversity calls for the appointment of a board-level Champion to advocate the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion and be accountable for improving practice and communicating the organisation's diversity strategies to the staff, membership and other stakeholders.

It is widely accepted that buy-in from senior leadership in diversity matters is vital for its success. Board members specifically have the opportunity to raise diversity issues at the highest level and have a high degree of influence over the organisation's strategy and its culture. As such they are key to integrating diversity values into the organisation's vision and strategic planning. By appointing a board- or equivalent-level Champion you are demonstrating a genuine commitment to diversity and cultural change.

The key roles of the Champion are to:

- Advocate for the importance of EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion);
- Prompt and inform discussion of EDI at board level.
- Advise and support staff working towards operational change.
- Promote the organisation's vision for equity, diversity and inclusion to relevant communities.
- Act as a high-level diversity contact for the Science Council.
- Be responsible for ensuring the organisation annually updates the Science Council on its strategic approach to diversity, actions taken, and any progress identified.

Champions are not expected to be a bastion of knowledge on diversity law, nor to operationally manage any diversity actions, but rather act as a figurehead in promoting and driving EDI work forwards. Some board members may have a particular interest in diversity, or relevant expertise; alternatively, it may be appropriate for the Chair of the Board to take on the role of diversity champion as an indication of collective responsibility. The Science Council can support champions through signposting to information and facilitating networking with other champions and experts.

Leadership at Operational Level

Developing and implementing a programme of work requires leadership within the executive team. Often this is at two levels with the chief executive, or equivalent, taking overall responsibility and a staff member leading implementation in consort with colleagues. Some organisations establish a diversity committee comprised of representatives for each function. The committee takes responsibility for ensuring all parts of the organisation are working towards inclusivity. Whatever approach taken, experience has shown that successful implementation requires buy-in from all areas of the organisation; this can be achieved through leadership from the chief executive and the alignment of objectives.

The delivery of the key aims can be through a variety of actions, depending on organisational size, resource and point on the diversity journey. Potential actions for those championing diversity at operational level are to:

- Act as a diversity role model, visibly supporting and championing EDI across the organisation
- Understand where the organisation is on its diversity journey, recognising where there is more to be learned and celebrating success.
- Promote the diversity agenda in all relevant meetings and activities, working towards EDI being integrated into normal business practice.
- Ensure EDI is being considered a priority action in all areas of the organisation.
- Identify and challenge resistance to EDI.
- Encourage a culture of individuality and openness within the organisation.
- Actively seek opportunities for collaborative action to increase the impact of EDI action.
- Communicate the organisation's commitment to EDI both internally and externally, representing the EDI position at events and to external partners.

This is not an exhaustive list but serves to indicate some example actions.

Support Available

If have questions or need further support, contact the Science Council:
diversity@sciencecouncil.org