Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1   Introduction

This Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) strategy supports the Hub's objectives to

- Promote a step change in composites manufacturing science and technologies.
- Create a pipeline of next generation technologies addressing future industrial needs and developing the national composites strategy
- Provide doctoral training for the next generation of composites manufacturing engineers
- Build and grow the national and international composites communities

This EDI policy has been created by consulting all of the policies from the individual Hub member universities. It outlines how the Hub will not only fulfil its legal duties, but also promote a culture where the diversity of the staff involved in the Hub is positively valued.

2   Our Vision

By valuing and respecting the perspectives and contributions of all colleagues and students involved in the Hub, we will foster a culture of mutual respect and create an enriched environment that enables people to thrive and to realise their full potential [1]. The Hub aims to create a learning and working environment based on fostering good relations between all people, with a shared commitment to promoting respect for all [2]. Our vision places equality and diversity at the heart of all we do and inspires us to excel by working together to maximise the benefits of our diversity.

3   Scope

This EDI policy is relevant to all individuals who study, work, visit or contribute to the EPSRC Future Composites Manufacturing Research Hub. It includes staff, students, visitors and partners, regardless of race or ethnicity, sex, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity status, marriage and civil partnership status, socioeconomic background and any other inappropriate distinction.

In keeping with our duties we will continue to engage and confer with our community and to monitor and act upon equality data. We will continue to assess the impact, or potential impact, of key policies, processes and practices on equality for staff and students.

4   The Law

The Equality Act 2010 requires public institutions to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Promote equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (defined in Section 5.4) and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In addition to Public Duty under the Equality Act 2010, universities have a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) not to act incompatibly with rights under the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the Convention).

5 Definitions

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are different things and they need to be progressed together. Equality of opportunity will only exist when we recognise and value difference and work together for inclusion.

5.1 Equality

Equality is about creating a fairer working environment where everyone can participate and has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential. Equality is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination based on membership of a particular group [3].

5.2 Diversity

Diversity is about recognising that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect and value difference. It is about harnessing this potential to create a productive environment in which the equally diverse needs of the Hub's partners can be met in a creative environment. It is about creating a workforce who feel valued/respected and have their potential fully utilised in order to meet the Hub's goals [3].

5.3 Inclusion

Inclusion refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and in wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included. Ultimately an inclusive working environment should allow people to be themselves at work.

5.4 Protected Characteristics [3-5]

There are nine protected characteristics upon which discrimination is unlawful:

5.4.1 Age
Age refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

5.4.2 Disability
A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It is important to remember that not all disabilities are visible.

5.4.3 Gender reassignment
The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

5.4.4 Marriage and civil partnership
Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman' or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. The public sector equality duty does not apply to this characteristic.

5.4.5 Pregnancy and maternity
Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context,

protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

5.4.6 Race
Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

5.4.7 Religion or belief
Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

5.4.8 Sex
A reference to a man or to a woman

5.4.9 Sexual orientation
Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes

6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Aims
Our strategic aim is to create a fully inclusive culture that is proactive in initiating change and driving forwards best practice in equality and diversity matters.

6.1 Lead by example

Members of the Hub Management Group are committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity at all levels within the Hub. This will be achieved by

- ensuring that equality and diversity practice is developed, implemented and promoted within their spheres of influence.
- leading by example to challenge and eliminate discrimination or bias and operate in a way which enables equality of opportunity and supports diversity [6].
- embedding an inclusive and respectful culture to ensure staff value the benefits of diversity. [4]
- developing a culture where it is 'safe to speak up' and challenge inappropriate behaviour without fear [4].
- encouraging regular communications and staff engagement activities to help Hub members understand the benefits of diversity and feel valued [4].

6.2 Maximise the diversity in the Hub's governance

- Ensure all committees within the Hub include diverse groups of people, particularly female, disabled and staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, by drawing from a wide pool, ensuring we represent our diverse communities.
- Develop appropriate mentoring/sponsorship schemes through the Hub's Researcher Network to support early career staff with their career development.

6.3 Maximise the recruitment, selection and retention of diverse staff

Generally, the recruitment of staff is governed by each member university's Human Resources policy. However, the Hub will ensure that the following guidelines are followed during the selection of Platform Fellows to increase the diversity of the Hub:

- Ensure recruitment and selection processes, procedures and training are fair, unbiased and inclusive.
- Ensure that both existing staff and students, as well as those who seek to apply to work with the Hub, are treated fairly and are judged solely on merit and by reference to their skills and abilities [7].
- Analyse Hub leaver data, including reasons for leaving and use the analysis to inform interventions to retain talented staff using Platform Funding.
- Take positive action to improve the opportunities and experiences of underrepresented groups.

6.4 Maximise engagement in EDI best practice across the Hub [8]

The Hub's commitment to EDI needs to be demonstrated and promoted through all internal and external communications [7]. In order for this to be successful, the Hub will explore the scope for specialist unconscious bias and governance/senior leadership training for Hub investigators and members of the Management Group.

6.5 EDI in committee meetings

The Hub has adopted the following guidelines to ensure discussions in meetings allow all members to contribute and debate in an inclusive and respectful manner:

- Respect will be given to the person speaking.
- Opinions, varied perspectives, and concerns should be heard and respected by everyone, even if there is disagreement. This will lead to better decision making, through a wider range of voices contributing to discussions [9].
- Discrimination will not be tolerated inside or outside of meetings.
- Minutes will be published which outline actions and decisions, but not to reveal personal views or information.
- Verbal, physical, and/or emotional aggression will not be tolerated.

7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Goals

The Hub operates within a field that has a traditional bias towards the recruitment of males. We will strive to overcome this by ensuring mixed gender and disciplinary representation at interview panels. As of October 2019, 25% of our Management Group and 27% of our Advisory Board are female. This has enabled us to recruit 29% female students jointly across the Hub (PhD) and IDC (EngD). This exceeds the national average for undergraduate (16.2%) and postgraduate (25.3%) students who registered for Engineering and Technology subjects in 2017/2018. However, the overall percentage of females working within the Hub is 17%, as all postdoctoral researchers are currently male. Our goal is to increase the percentage of females to 30% across all levels by the end of 2023.

We have also successfully attracted a number of students from either a Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background. Across the Hub and IDC, 20% of students are from a BAME background, which is in line with figures published for undergraduates (21.4%) and postgraduates (19.9%) who registered for Engineering and Technology subjects in 2017/2018 (according to HESA University Data Set (THUDS)). BAME representation at project Investigator level is lower at 7%, but this is countered by higher representation at the postdoctoral researcher level (27%). The goal is to achieve a 20% BAME representation across all working levels of the Hub by the end of 2023.

8   Action Plan

8.1   Delivery of the Strategy

The roles and responsibility for delivering the strategy are as follows:

8.1.1   Management Group

The Hub's Management Group are responsible for championing Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and ensuring the Strategy is implemented and maintained within their areas of responsibility. They should demonstrate appropriate behaviours and processes to enable the Hub to create and maintain an inclusive working and learning environment [4]. The Hub Management Group will ensure that all Hub members are made aware of this policy through the Hub's website, publications and communications, as appropriate [2].

8.1.2   Project Investigators

All project Investigators are responsible for ensuring all postdoctoral researchers and PhD/EngD students are informed about their responsibilities under the Equality Act and for supporting this strategy in their areas of work.

8.1.3   All Hub members

All personnel involved in the Hub have a responsibility to read and understand this policy and to report unacceptable behaviour in a safe manner. In addition, all Hub members have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with the requirements of the Equality Act, namely to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different groups [10].

The following mechanisms have been implemented to achieve the goals of the EDI policy, which will be regularly reviewed:

8.2   EDI Monitoring

Monitoring is a key process for the successful implementation of this EDI policy, as it will assist with highlighting positive and negative trends within the Hub [2]. Regular monitoring will:

- Ensure implementation of good practices
- Inform and improve policy and practice for staff and students
- Identify gaps or where there is under-representation
- Enable positive action to be taken
- Inform the Management Group and assist with objective decision making

The Hub Manager will keep track of EDI statistics for the Hub and take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims. These statistics will be included in the Hub's annual report and published on the Hub's website.

The Hub Manager will subject this policy to continuous assessment in order to examine how it affects protected groups and identify whether this policy helps to achieve equality of opportunity for all groups, or whether it has an adverse impact [11].

The Management Group will monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, collecting and collating equalities information and data as required by law or for the furtherance of the Hub's EDI objectives.

8.3 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management will improve the availability and use of information across the Hub, to support knowledge exchange and improve this policy.

- This policy will be published widely amongst staff and students involved in the Hub, together with policy assessments, equality analysis and results of monitoring [11].
- The Hub's EDI policy will be reviewed by the PVC for EDI, Prof Sarah Sharples at the University of Nottingham (the Hub's lead partner)
- The EDI policy will be made publicly available on the CIMComp.ac.uk website, ensuring the policy document and information is presented in a coherent and accessible manner.
- Meaningful two-way channels of communication will be established to ensure people feel listened to and valued, but also for the Hub to keep in touch with staff and student experiences. Opportunities will be created for staff and students to interact formally and informally with the leadership team, via the Spoke representative on the Management Group [12].

8.4 Policy Improvement

The EDI policies of all new Hub members will be reviewed and changes will be incorporated into this policy where appropriate.

9 References

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