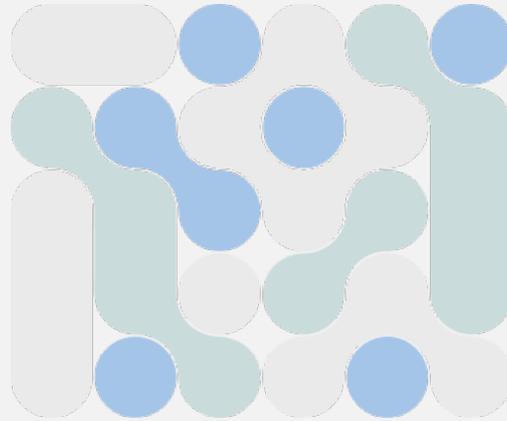


EDICa



EDICa Newsletter – May-June ‘24

EDI Caucus: Supporting UK research and innovation with evidence-based reviews of equality, diversity & inclusion practices.

For the static PDF version of the newsletter, please click here

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Newsletter/2024-06>

The newsletter will always be written in plain English, however if you would like a version summarised in British Sign Language, let us know.

In This Issue

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- **Call for Participants**
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Flexible Fund Announcements

Round 3 Soft Launch- Organisation of Work and Enabling Workspaces

EDICa soft launched its last round of flexible funding on Monday, 17 June. This round is worth approximately £335,000 and we expect to fund 4-6 short projects, each lasting around **6-9 months**. Projects **MUST** finish by the end of 2025 when EDICa's funding is due to end. We will consider all proposals but will prioritise work that focuses on the organisation of work and enabling workspaces.

Once again, we welcome research that explores the diversity of voices, ideas and experiences in our research and innovation ecosystem. This time, however, we are interested in an under-explored set of issues pertaining to how work can be organised and designed to create enabling workplaces. We would particularly welcome proposals (not exhaustive) that centre on one or multiple aspects of research and innovation workplaces, including making recommendations for minimising inequalities in EDI and human resource practice, health and safety and well-being practice, employment relations policy, etc. Workplaces we are particularly interested in include

- Laboratories (e.g. static, or on-board ships or rigs, underground)
- Offices (including exclusively home or hybrid working, open plan, single or shared occupancy)
- Field sites (temporary or more permanent, geographically local or remote, defined by extreme environments, e.g. excessive noise or lack of sound, high or low temperatures, strong smells, bright or dim lighting)
- The mobile workplace (working while travelling, or innovations for vehicle-based researchers or innovators), or how new technology (including artificial intelligence) is creating opportunities involving virtual or holographic aspects and forms of working.

However, we also welcome proposals that consider the journey to and from work (via personal vehicles or public transport).



The call for mandatory expressions of interest opens 15 July and closes 30 September. The call formally opens on 5 August, with a deadline of 31 October. Further information and details can be found on our website: <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund/>

Round 2

Applications for round 2 of our flexible funding are currently under final reviews. Decisions should be communicated to applicants in mid-July, and we look forward to announcing the successful projects in our next bimonthly newsletter.

Call for Participants

One of EDICa's funded projects from the first round of Flexible Funding is seeking to interview women employed in a STEM faculty or research centre in a university or an organisation, who experience or have experienced mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, panic disorder, etc) at some point in their career in STEM research and innovation. The team, led by Prof Dulini Fernando, is seeking to understand experiences and challenges of managing careers in STEM.

The work and career experiences of women with mental health issues in STEM research and innovation

We are seeking to interview women employed in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics) faculty /research centre in a university or an organization who experience or have experienced MHIs (e.g., depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, panic disorder etc.) at some point of their career in STEM research and innovation to help us understand experiences and challenges of managing careers in STEM.

- If you would like to take part, please email: info@wisecampaign.org.uk for more information.
- If you have any further questions or concerns about this research, please email the primary investigators:
 - Dulini Fernando d.fernando2@aston.ac.uk
 - Elna Meliou elina.meliou@brunel.ac.uk
 - Krystal Wilkinson K.Wilkinson@mmu.ac.uk

Logos: Brunel University London, Brunel Business School, Aston University BIRMINGHAM UK, EDICa, wise, Manchester Metropolitan University

The project is titled "**The work and career experiences of women with mental health issues in STEM research and innovation**" <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund-project-2/>

Please share this with your networks. Anyone wishing to take part should email info@wisecampaign.org.uk for more information.

EDICa's early career researcher, Dr Dong Lin, continues to seek participants for interviews looking at neurodivergence, disability, and mental health and early career researchers in UK academia.

The new deadline is **26 July**. Please share this poster with your early career researcher networks. This research will inform how we can support diversity and inclusion in research careers. If you have questions, email Dr Lin at D.Lin@hw.ac.uk

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS EDICa

Are you an early career researcher in UK academia?

Are you neurodivergent, or do you live with mental health, hearing, vision, speech, or long-term health conditions?

Join us to discuss the barriers, challenges, and opportunities you have experienced within UK academia

Who are we looking for?

Individuals who are based in the UK or have previously worked in the UK and identify as:

Early-career researchers (within eight years of receiving their PhD, or within six years of their first academic appointment), and

Living with any of the following conditions:

- **Long-Term Health Conditions**, e.g., chronic pain or fatigue, asthma, pneumonia, stomach or digestion problems, heart or blood circulation problems, diabetes, skin conditions, endometriosis, conditions related to the back, neck, legs, feet, arms, or hands.
- **Mental Health Conditions**, e.g., depression, anxiety, eating disorders.
- **Neurodivergence**, e.g., autism, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, ADHD.
- **Sensory and Communication Conditions**, e.g., hearing, vision, speech conditions.

What does participating involve?

Participants will take part in a one-hour interview via Teams or Zoom.

We also offer alternative participation options to meet diverse needs, including the option to respond to questions via email or Word document. British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation is available upon request.

Do you want to participate?

To express your interest in taking part in this research study, please check the link: <https://go.hw.ac.uk/ECR-ethnicity.and.health>, or scan the QR code.

If you have any questions, email Dr Dong Lin at d.lin@hw.ac.uk.

Deadline 26 July 2024

This research has been approved by the School of Social Sciences Ethics Committee at Heriot-Watt University.

1 - Call for Participants Poster

Workstream Updates

The Career- Life Cycle

In June, we published our report on *Recommendations for Improving Support for Researchers Managing Menstrual Health*, which has attracted much interest from HR, personnel management, and higher education media outlets.

You can view and download the report here:

<https://researchportal.hw.ac.uk/en/publications/recommendations-for-improving-support-for-researchers-managing-me>

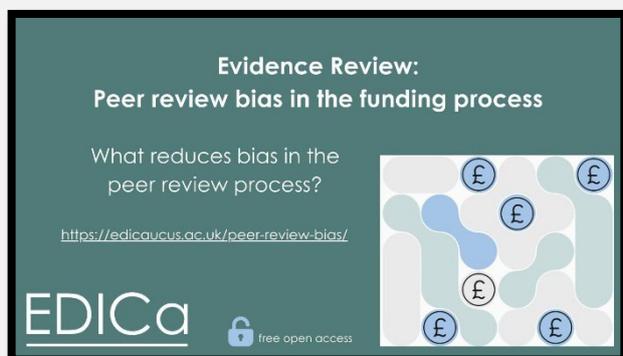
The report explains the methodology of our ongoing study, as well as initial findings from the 55 interviews conducted last autumn. From this report, readers can receive recommendations for changes at the organisational/institutional level, the team/department level, and at the individual level. The intended audience is everyone working in the research & innovation sector, not just those who menstruate.



The Research Process

In our report on **Peer Review Bias in the Funding Process**, available here

<https://edicaucus.ac.uk/peer-review-bias/>, EDICa identified a gap in the research around internal demand management. EPSRC has already identified the challenge of "selection bias" in internal processes which is impacting the diversity of applicants they receive.



As context for those unfamiliar with internal demand management, some funders limit the number of applications an institution is allowed to submit, to prevent an overwhelming of the review system and wasted effort by academics. Some funders have set an application success rate measure as well. An institution that falls below a certain rate

of success is penalised with fewer opportunities to apply in future.

<https://www.ukri.org/councils/nerc/guidance-for-applicants/types-of-funding-we->

[offer/discovery-science/demand-management/](#)) This leads to an attempt by institutions to predict applications that will be successful with peer review panels.

This part of the research process is under-researched in the context of EDI concerns and what protocols might help ensure that both funders and institutions are clear on the rules of engagement. **EDICa is looking for expressions of interest in an exploratory discussion of the issues on demand management**, approaches taken, etc. If you would be willing to participate in a virtual digital discussion on this issue **on 19 July 15:00-16:00**, let us know by emailing EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk.

The Organisation of Work

Workstream 3 is the focus of the final round of flexible funding (see first section).

As part of our study looking into Covid-19's impact on the UK's research and innovation career, EDICa will shortly announce a call for interview participants to discuss how to make the workplace more enabling and accessible. If you're interested in participating, email us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk.

EDICa continued with more visits to places where research happens in the UK. Prof Kate Sang and Dr James Richards toured the Scottish National Portrait Galleries stores, and Kate, James, Dr Siddhartha Saxena and Fenella Watson were given a tour by Dr Nick Fraser of the natural history section of the National Museums of Scotland's Collections Centre. NMS are one of EDICa's project partners.

The NMS stores can be toured by the public, if they book tickets on offered days ([linked here](#)). The purpose-built Collections Centre opened in 2015, designed to make the research easier, the storage better for people and collections, and the collections more accessible to visitors. The EDICa team discussed hybrid working arrangements, temperature control, and hot desking. We checked out the toilets (unisex accessible toilet rooms) and kitchen relaxing space. We learned about the hazards that researchers have to carefully manage such as arsenic used in taxidermy, ethanol used in the wet collections, and radiation from certain minerals. If you have an interest in the myriad of hazards found in museum collections, here's a user-friendly e-tool of what hazards there are, what they might look like in collections, and how they should be handled ([linked here](#)).

NMS have made improvements on standardising the weight of boxes containing a collection, making it more manageable for lifting. Larger containers in the wet collection now have castors, making it easier to manoeuvre. The movement between buildings is still less than ideal, being outside in the elements and over uneven ground.

In early July, EDICa researchers are due to visit the Roslin Institute, the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Heriot-Watt University's School of Textiles and Design including The Textile Collection, which contains an internationally recognised resource for Scottish textile heritage and includes some early and rare examples of tweed and tartan.

EDICa researchers are gathering data - including photos, sound recordings, and experiences - which will inform our later research and virtual reality scenes for enabling workplaces.



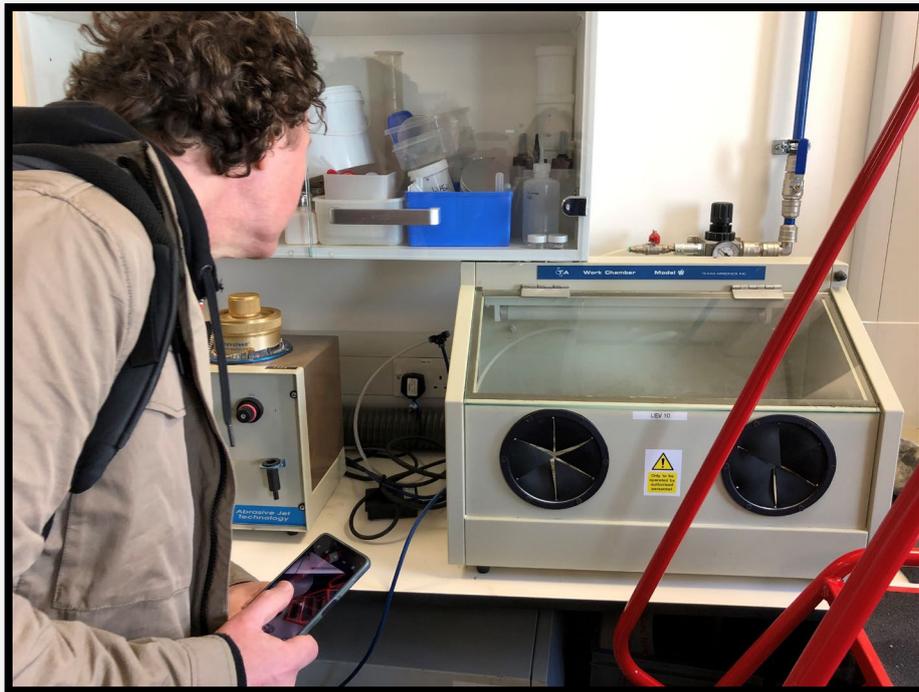
2 - Whale bones - Dr Nick Fraser (head of the Department of Natural Sciences at the National Museums of Scotland) and EDICa's Dr Siddhartha Saxena.



3 - Minerals stores, mineralogist cataloguing.

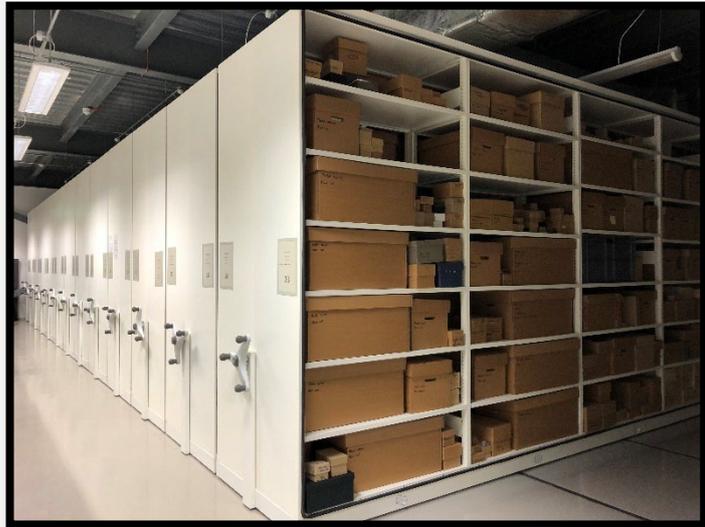


4 - Bugs on sticks - from NMS's entomology collection

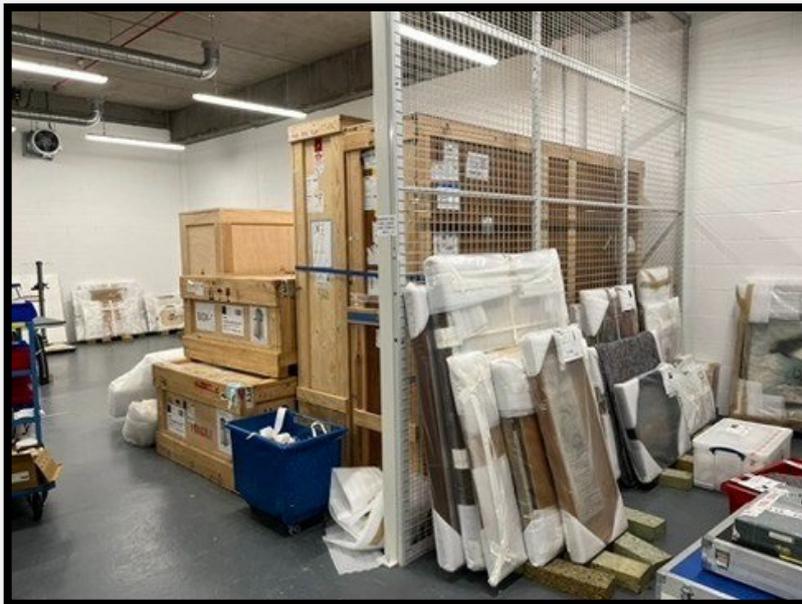


5 - EDICa's James Richards looking at a lab glove box.

6 - Vertebrate stores



8 - The wet collection



7 - National Galleries of Scotland stores



10 - National Galleries of Scotland workspace



9 - National Galleries of Scotland
tools of the trade

EDICa Seminars

Seminar June 2024: Deaf Researchers' Experience of Working in the Research Sector

Our seminar due to take place on 25 June unfortunately needed to be postponed due to illness.

We are looking to reschedule this for the end of August. It will be recorded and shared on our YouTube channel and website.

In the seminar, EDICa will host a conversation chaired by EDICa's Prof Jemina Napier with four deaf researchers with experience of working in the UK's research sector. Dr Emma Ferguson-Coleman, Ixone Sáenz Paraíso, Gary Quinn, and Dr Mette Sommer Lindsay. The conversation will take place in British Sign Language with interpreters providing an interpretation into spoken English.

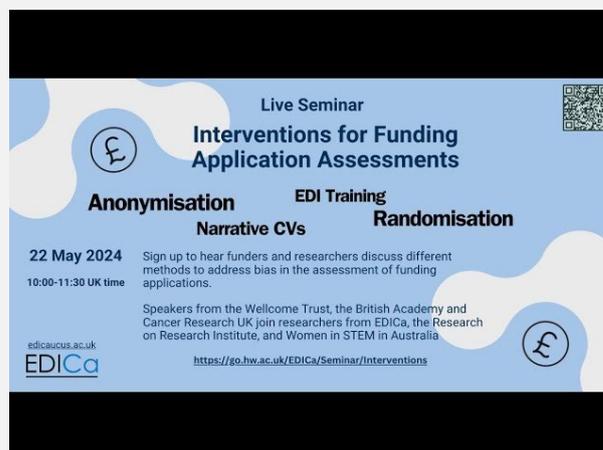


Seminar Recordings: Peer Review Bias & Interventions

In April EDICa hosted a seminar on Peer Review Bias, featuring EDICa's Dr Cat Morgan talking about the report on Peer Review Bias, Dr Ruby Zelzer discussing racism in the peer review process, and Prof Mustafa Ozbilgin speaking to peer review in publishing. ([Linked here](#))



In May we hosted a panel of speakers from the Wellcome Trust, the British Academy and Cancer Research UK along with researchers from EDICa, the Research on Research Institute, and Women in STEM in Australia discussing the rationale for, and effectiveness of, interventions that have been implemented to make the application assessment process fairer. ([Linked here](#))



Catch us here...

[EDICa's TikTok channel](#) is now active, with videos created for a different audience than our other communication platforms. You can help by sharing our videos to try and raise awareness.



Porto, Portugal
27-30 August 2024

Dr Cat Morgan and Chiara Cocco are at the European Sociological Association presenting a paper on managing problematic menstruation in precarious research workplaces.

<https://www.europeansociology.org/conferences>

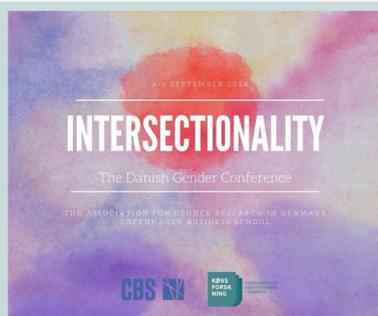
BAM 2024
CONFERENCE



Nottingham Trent University
2-6 September

Dr Stefanie Schneider & Prof Robert Macintosh presenting research co-authored with Dr Cat Morgan on processes, obstacles and opportunities behind EDI interventions in Higher Education so far overlooked.

<https://www.bam.ac.uk/events-landing/bam2024-conference.html>



Copenhagen, Denmark
4-6 September 2024

EDICa has a paper accepted to The Danish Gender Conference taking place in Copenhagen. This year's theme is 'intersectionality'.

<https://www.tilmeld.dk/dgc/conference>

Women and Leadership in the Creative Industries: An Inter-disciplinary Symposium
Thursday 12 to Friday 13 September 2024



University of Bournemouth
12-13 September 2024

EDICa will be presenting research on barriers encountered by women on the path to leadership.

<https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/centres-institutes/centre-excellence-media-practice/women-leadership-creative-industries>

Spotlight on the field

LGBT + academics' and PhD students' experiences of visibility in STEM: more than raising the rainbow flag by Dr Marco Reggiani, Dr Jessica Dawn Gagnon & Prof Rebecca Jane Lunn. ([linked here](#) open access)

As Pride month comes to a close, researchers on the IGNITE+ team have written about how "visibility is still a risk for LGBT + academics and PhD students in STEM".

"The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT +) individuals in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) are still understudied and, despite some improvements, are still characterised by patterns of exclusion, disadvantage, and discrimination. [...] The article argues that addressing LGBT + visibility should firstly be an institutional responsibility and not an individual burden and that this work is essential to set the conditions for personal visibility to happen by choice, safely and without retribution."

In recent conversation with Gagnon and Reggiani, they observed that someone coming out to colleagues is not just thinking about their safety and acceptance within that role and institution, but also having to consider their safety and acceptance further down their career. It's important, therefore, to do your best to make the workplace inclusive, safe and accepting, but not take it personally if someone still wishes not to be open or disclose. This is true not just for LGTBQ+ colleagues but also disabled colleagues.



The **Institute of Physics (IOP)** published a report on the "State of Peer Review 2024" ([linked here](#)). Here's an extract from the section on bias:

"The proportion of respondents reporting to have experienced bias in the peer review process has gone down since 2020 (16% in 2024, compared with 24% in 2020). Of those who did report experiencing bias in peer review, the most common type of bias reported was geographical bias (6% in 2024 vs 8% in 2020), followed by subject area bias and institutional bias. The least common types of bias reported were gender, sexuality and disability. 0.6% of respondents reported experiencing gender bias, compared with 2% in the 2020 survey.

"A strong theme in the comments was perceived geographical bias of reviewers against authors from specific global regions or countries. Many respondents noted that they felt they had been discriminated against, or had witnessed discrimination against, authors from certain regions. Other respondents gave credibility to these concerns by noting that they themselves were biased against certain regions. For example, one respondent commented, "I have to admit that I already assume a paper to be of low-quality if the author is based in [COUNTRIES REDACTED]".

"Another recurrent theme in the free text responses was bias on the part of editorial staff for or against reviewers from specific countries. Many respondents felt that their reviewer reports and recommendations had been disregarded or given less weight by editors because of their nationality. There was a feeling that editors listened less to the voices of reviewers from low- and middle-income countries compared with higher-income countries. There was also a feeling that editorial teams predominantly based in high-income countries were biased towards authors from the same countries: "Authors close to editors have privileged conversation vs. isolated authors in developing countries".

"Other forms of bias highlighted by respondents included bias against early-career researcher authors (by both reviewers and editors), bias for or against certain institutions, and bias against particular methodologies or scientific concepts."

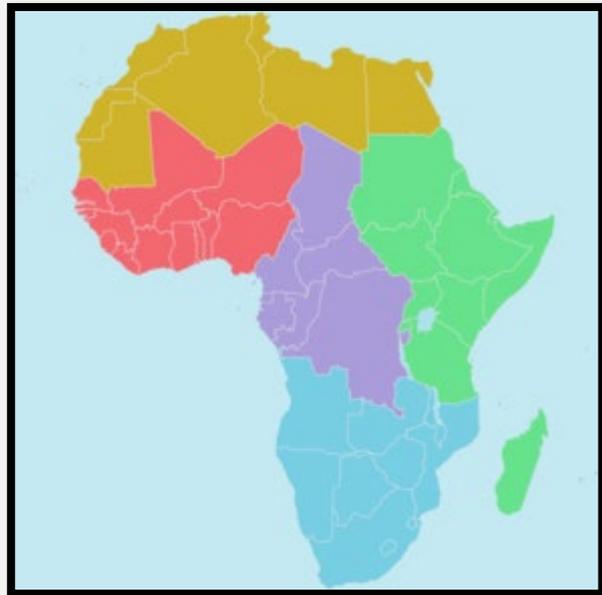
From 3046 physical science researchers responding.

Click here to read the discussion of all the results: <https://iopublishing.org/state-of-peer-review-2024-discussion/>

On 24 May, The Inclusion Initiative at the London School of Economics hosted a panel discussion called **Beyond WEIRD Countries**. "The term 'WEIRD' stands for "Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic", representing a mere 12% of the world's population, yet dominating the narrative in research and DEI conversations. Our aim was to shift the focus towards a more global perspective on DEI, moving beyond the confines of the Americas and Western Europe." You can watch the recording here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3K2EufZidc>

The problem with the term "Sub-Saharan Africa". Dr Bethlehem Tekola Gebru, a postdoctoral research associate at King's College London, called out the continuing use of the term "Sub-Saharan Africa" in journal articles and the media. "More academics should realise that this term is problematic, and it makes more sense to use geographic markers such as East and West Africa or to list the names of countries they are talking about," she wrote in a post on X/Twitter ([linked here](#)). She shared a blog post by Prof Foluke Ifejola Adebisi ([linked here](#)) from 2016, an online news article from Quartz also from 2016 when Mark Zuckerberg visited Nigeria ([linked here](#)), and a 2006 long academic article by Prof. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza printed in the Selected Proceedings of the 36th Annual Conference on African Linguistics ([linked here](#)).



Dr Tekola Gebru has conducted research on three autism research projects in Ethiopia and Kenya. The discussion of neurodiversity has tended to be western-centred. In this article ([linked here](#)) Cheng, Tekola et al. argue "[t]he fundamental underlying values of the neurodiversity paradigm – equality, dignity, and respect for all people – could be said to be universally understood, and recognised by many countries in national law or international human rights treaties[...]. However, the uncritical transportation and application of this wholesale framework from European and North American communities to those of Asia and Africa must be avoided." The article is relatively accessible reading for the non-academic EDI practitioner looking to broaden understanding of neurodiversity in a global context as it touches on experiences in Ethiopia, India and Hong Kong.

Supporting carers in travelling for research & innovation careers

With conference season underway, administrators, managers and EDI practitioners should be aware that there continues to be barriers for people with young children to travel and participate in conferences, according to a column in *Nature* ([linked here](#)). The UK-based authors explained that while some funders have begun covering the costs of dependants, in reality the expenses policies of their employing institution have not been updated to allow for them to claim those expenses. "Carers need organizations to update and align internal financial reimbursement policies."

The authors point out that an on-site creche is not the solution for all situations, and that flexibility is key to meet varying needs.

"Employers, funders and organizations need to consider how best to reduce the financial burden of bringing young children to conferences as well as how best to cater for carers' participation in smaller events, such as workshops, research visits, invited seminars, interviews or PhD vivas."

They finish by sharing how opportunities can be made "to be flexible, adaptable, comprehensive and transparent."

IGNITE+ announces its flexible funding projects

<https://www.ignitenetplus.ac.uk/initiatives/funded-projects>

The IGNITE+ Network's aim is to help the energy research community develop an inclusive and welcoming culture that ensures equal opportunities for all. IGNITE+ announced the three successful projects worth £60,000 each, from its final round of flexible funding, due to start 1 January 2025.



- **Enhancing Inclusion: Evaluating, Co-Creating, and Implementing Effective Practices to Address Barriers for LGBTQ+ Researchers in STEM and Energy**
- **Navigating EDI Complexity: Addressing Challenges in Energy Research Sector**
- **Understanding barriers to participation in energy sector career pathways for disabled young people: not seen and not heard?**

The Technician Commitment launched a new report: 'Inception to Impact: Seven Years of the Technician Commitment' ([linked here](#)), a collection of case studies reflecting on progress made by institutions who have been part of the initiative since 2017.

"While the tangible change in culture is undeniable, it is acknowledged that there is still a need for continued and sustained advocacy and action to further support, develop, and advocate for this indispensable workforce within higher education and research."

Spotlight on accessibility

The Biochemical Society and Portland Press are hosting a webinar on **Thursday, 4 July 14:00-15:00 BST on Improving Accessibility in the Lab.**

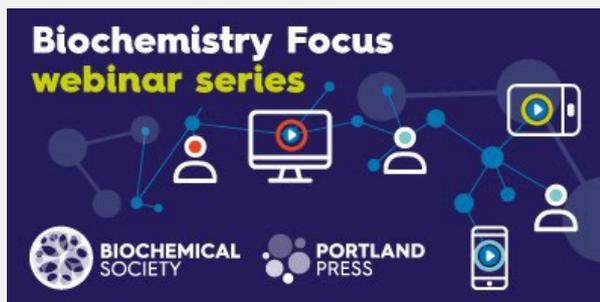
"Individuals with disabilities can face multiple barriers in the workplace, primarily the limited resources available for staff training and purchasing accessibility-related technology. A recent study on workplace accommodations to support people with disabilities concluded that adjustments could have a positive impact on the level of creative work by disabled and non-disabled employees by enhancing their creative self-efficacy."

In this session the speakers will explore some of the limitations encountered in the laboratory environment with the aim

of highlighting key modifications and considerations that can ease the barriers for all scientists and pave the way for a new generation of discoveries! Speakers: Dr Kate Hammond, University of Liverpool, UK; Avril Morrison, Aberdeenshire Council, UK; Dr Kent Hunter, National Institute of Health, USA; chaired by Dr Amanda Marie James, Emory University, USA and Chair of the Biochemical Society's EDI Advisory Panel.

A British Sign Language interpreter will be available.

Click here to register: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2417925462711875163>



Get Involved

Sign up to receive our newsletter, calls for participation and Flexible Fund:

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Subscription>

Follow us on Twitter [@EDI_Caucus](#), [LinkedIn](#), [BlueSky](#) [TikTok](#), and on [Instagram](#).

To unsubscribe from our newsletter, please email EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk

EDI Caucus, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

The logo for EDI Ca features the letters 'EDI' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by 'Ca' in a blue, rounded, sans-serif font. A thick black horizontal line is positioned below the text.

Funders of the EDI Caucus

