

EDICa



EDICa Newsletter – Sept-Oct '23

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

Not everyone likes the moving graphics of the software we're using for the newsletter. If you would like a static PDF version of the newsletter, please click here

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Newsletter/2023-10>

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

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Call for Participants

Menstrual Health Study

EDICa seeks people who have experience of managing menstruation symptoms and/or (peri)menopause in a research & innovation workplace. <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/menstrual-health/>

The aim of this study is to remove barriers to participation and career development for those who menstruate and/or go through (peri)menopause, creating inclusive and accessible careers across the UK's research & innovation ecosystem.

This is an intersectional and inclusive study. We particularly encourage people from under-represented groups, including trans men, non-binary, genderqueer individuals and people from marginalised groups.

Please share with networks and in workplaces.

Research Sites Needed for Menstrual Health & (Peri)Menopause Study

We're looking for a UK-based academic site to test menstrual health- and (peri)menopause-friendly practices and interventions. We will be co-designing interventions and practices in focus groups towards the end of this year, which we will then deploy in a few test-sites in the UK in different settings. If you think your institution could act as a test site email us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk



EDICa EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk
<https://linktr.ee/edicaucus>

Call for: Research Sites

Requirements:

- Be an academic site
- Be willing to test menstrual health and (peri)menopause friendly practices and interventions to support employees and PGRs.

Contact us:
EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk

The poster features an illustration of two people interacting with large digital screens displaying data charts and graphs, set against a background of blue and yellow dots.

Survey of impact Covid-19 has had on careers & inequalities

EDICa has extended to 15 December our survey of everyone working in the UK's research and innovation ecosystem. We're seeking further responses to improve our modelling and analysis. We want to hear from those who found the pandemic and lockdowns to be a boost to their career, those who blossomed in the remote-working culture, and those whose careers were pulled off track to focus on Covid-related work.

We're getting a great response but we encourage innovators, technicians, and clinical staff to respond. Please share widely with your networks.



Project Updates

Advisory Board

EDICa's Advisory Board met for the first time in September. We're looking forward to continuing work with our Advisory Board to provide critical friend feedback as EDICa begins to design interventions based on our research. A full list of advisory board members will be shared on our website in due course.

Innovator partnership

We're delighted to announce a new partnership with the 10-year-old start-up, Intelligent Growth Solutions (IGS). IGS is a technology company developing vertical farming technology. EDICa has visited the Edinburgh offices and the Crop Research Centre in Invergowrie, along with meeting IGS staff to discuss the challenges in EDI. IGS will be one of our test sites for interventions and practices over the next two years. Read more about our partnership [here](#).



We're open to partnering with other types of innovators. Contact us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk if your organisation wants to get involved.

Flexible Fund

Round 1

Our first Flexible Fund closed on 31 October. The first tranche of funds is worth roughly £333,000, of the £1million to be awarded over the course of the project. We are looking forward to reviewing the applications and announcing the successful projects in December.

We are happy to share that our initial review indicates that the applicants represent multiple dimensions of diversity. We will further analyse our data aiming to make our future calls as inclusive as possible.

Round 2

We are currently planning the **second Flexible Fund call**. This will prioritise work that focuses on the exercise of academic judgement in the research process, e.g. processes of applying for, and evaluating applications for, research funds or the related processes of seeking publication in peer-reviewed outlets. We will be announcing further details in our soft launch in December. This announcement will be on our website: <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund/> and sent to our network subscribers.

We have received constructive feedback from the first call which we will be attempting to address in the second call. This will include a longer timeline for the call. We are currently aiming for our second call for proposals to open in mid-January 2024. Expressions of Interest will be mandatory for this round, enabling us to provide feedback on projects' applicability to the topic and enabling us to arrange sufficient reviewers to quickly assess and decide on the successful applications.

Workstream Updates

The Career- Life Cycle

While we continue collecting data from our **menstrual health interviews** (<https://edicaucus.ac.uk/menstrual-health/>) we are designing focus groups which will focus on developing solutions to the challenges raised by interview participants. These solutions will be trialled in pilot sites in 2024. We are looking for research sites in the academic setting. If your institution is interested, contact us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk .



Our research is intersectional and inclusive. We encourage those from minoritised backgrounds and under-represented groups, including trans men, non-binary, and genderqueer individuals.

Stakeholder Engagement Groups

We put out a call for Stakeholder Engagement Groups, seeking people with lived experience of one or more EDI characteristics. We also sought those who can represent the experience and views of our main stakeholders – e.g. learned societies, publishers, private and charity sectors, advocacy groups, policy-makers. We will be selecting a representative 30 people to form a core co-design group, which will become our community of practice. The cohort will meet online every three months, and we have a budget set aside to remunerate participants with a low income. There will also be a wider group we will consult on specific pieces of research on a more ad hoc basis.

The Research Process

Our call for expressions of interest to become one of our 40 **Equity Champions** closed on 20 October. We were pleased that over 100 colleagues came forward. We are now reviewing all expressions of interest to form a group of the cohort of 40 which is representative of a range of disciplines and research settings, degrees of seniority, areas of expertise and organisational affiliations across each nation in the UK. This cohort will support our work on how we can embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the research process and increase the diversity literacy of researchers. The Equity Champions will work with us in a longitudinal study over 2024 and 2025, using quarterly interviews and video diaries to help create and foster equitable research cultures in their teams.

The Organisation of Work

Our **survey looking at the impact Covid-19** and its lockdowns have had on careers in research & innovation and inequalities has been extended until 15 December in order to collect further responses from across the UK. We would appreciate any and all support in sharing this survey as widely as possible. <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Covid19-2023>

We will shortly begin phase 2 of this study using **focus groups and interviews**. Our goal is to delve deeper into the challenges and opportunities identified in our survey and existing literature, focusing

on understanding how work can be structured in various research and innovation environments to create enabling and supportive workplaces. We will co-design practical strategies with employees in research & innovation to share workplaces and workspaces that foster the success and well-being of all, considering the unique needs and challenges faced by individuals in different work environments. Email us to express your interest in participating edicaucus@hw.ac.uk

New study involving experiences of doctoral students and key stakeholders to doctoral studies

EDICa has just been commissioned by UKRI to conduct an appraisal of the experiences of doctoral students in relation to changing standard terms and conditions of training grants. The study will be based around focus groups (mid-late November 2023) with doctoral students, plus key stakeholders to doctoral studies, such as disability officers, PGR co-ordinators, directors of doctoral training programmes. The appraisal is underpinned by attention to a select range of equality, diversity and inclusion aspects of such changing terms and conditions. Further details are to follow, but if you are one of the following, or can help with the dissemination of information to recruit such people, please email us at: edicaucus@hw.ac.uk

- Current disabled, neurodivergent or deaf doctoral student
- Current doctoral student with childcare responsibilities
- Current doctoral student with caring responsibilities
- Current doctoral student who has changed mode of study to manage studies, e.g., from full- to part-time
- A doctoral student who left their doctoral programme in the last 3 years without completion of their degree
- A student who in the last 3 years secured a place on a doctoral programme but subsequently turned down the offer
- A member of staff with chief responsibilities for doctoral students, e.g., a disability officer, PGR co-ordinator, director of doctoral training programme

A £50 honorarium will be paid to all participants.

Spotlight on the field

First Deaf Professor in Deaf Studies in the UK - Prof Annelies Kusters

EDICa is proud that a Heriot-Watt University colleague was promoted to Professor, becoming the first deaf scholar to achieve the status in the UK in the field of Deaf Studies and Sign Language Studies.

Prof Kusters has travelled the world, studying the sign languages and deaf cultures across the continents. She is Principal Investigator of [Mobile Deaf](#), a project funded by the European Research Council exploring how deaf people from different countries interact with each other and adapt their signing to be able to understand each other. On their site are several films available to watch.

#deafTravel is a 1:50 long unscripted ethnographic film of deaf tourists visiting Bali in 2018. **Finding Spaces to Belong** is an hour-long ethnographic documentary film that delves into the lives of four deaf migrants navigating their way in London. **This is IS** explores what International Sign is over the course of 6 episodes between 50 and 80 minutes each.

Watch the 7-minute trailer here: <https://vimeo.com/830816017>

Why female STEM PhDs are less likely to become new inventors

Research from MIT Sloan by Prof Fiona Murray and Copenhagen Business School's Mercedes Delgado "found that female STEM PhD students were 21% less likely than their male counterparts to have been trained by top inventor advisors". This affects their chances of filing their first patent during their PhD studies through a co-patent with the advisor. EDICa has had conversations with the UK's IPO (Intellectual Property Office) who see a similar result further down the pipeline with fewer women applying for patents. Murray & Delgado suggest reviewing the process of matching advisor to advisee; encouraging female faculty to engage in higher levels of patenting; actively encouraging students to participate in more patenting.

The issue is complex and the summary article from MIT Sloan School of Management is worth a quick read – [linked here](#). Or the full study [linked here](#). While the paper is from the US context, it will have applicable lessons to the UK context. Diverse teams, including those with gender diversity, are more likely to search the solution space more widely, emphasize different problem domains, and have higher collective intelligence, leading to better outcomes.

Pain, No Gain? A Joint-autoethnography of Our Working Lives As Academics with Chronic Illnesses

by Samantha Wilkinson and Catherine Wilkinson, International Journal of Changes in Education, November 2023 [Link here](#)

The authors of this paper are two female academics working in UK higher education whilst living with a chronic illness. They used the novel method of a joint autoethnographic approach to counter the image of the standardised academic (able-bodied, male). Their paper also leads to awareness and understanding of those with chronic illness. The diary excerpts are easily readable and worth skimming. They conclude that they "found that we attempted to 'pass' as 'normal', worrying that knowledge of our chronic illness may categorise us as" abnormal or deviant leading to stigmatisation.

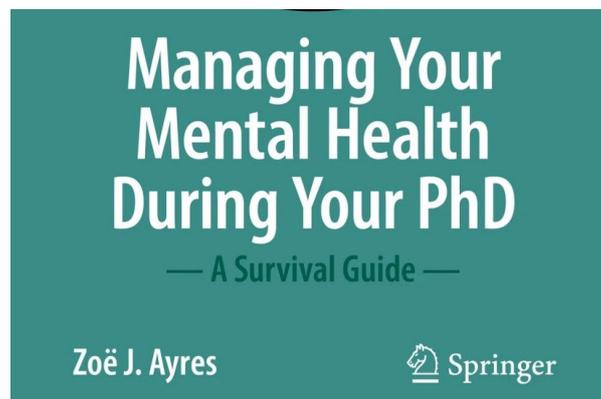
The paper includes three practical recommendations:

1. That institutions create a support network for those with in/visible illnesses.
2. Encourages higher education academics to keep similar reflective diaries. “The more voices we hear the more the unique experiences and challenges faced by chronically ill academics can be recognised”.
3. That institutions adopt inclusive and supportive processes to support progression for those with chronic illnesses.

What we're into just now

Dr Zoë Ayres’s book **Managing Your Mental Health During Your PhD** is a survival guide for current and prospective PhD students. It investigates why mental health issues are so common among postgrads. Dr Ayres has provided an audiobook version for free which can be found here: <https://shows.acast.com/managing-your-mental-health-during-your-phd-a-survival-guide> The book is split into 12 chapters ranging in length from 20 to 70 minutes.

A physical or PDF of the book can be found here: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-14194-2>



Spotlight on accessibility

In previous newsletters we highlighted why the Newsletter colours are what they are and explained more about Alt Text. In this issue we're highlighting an AHRC-funded project: Inclusive Description for Equality and Access (IDEA) which was done in partnership with VocalEyes (linked here: <https://vocaleyes.co.uk/>).



One of their outputs is a **Guide to Self-description for Inclusive Meetings** – linked here: <https://vocaleyes.co.uk/services/resources/digital-accessibility-and-inclusion/self-description-for-inclusive-meetings/> Versions are available in 17 languages and in multiple formats.

When you're holding a meeting or a conference, during those introductions, have people give a very brief description of themselves. The guide says that "a good rule of thumb is to restrict yourself to three key elements and one or two sentences. If you were arranging to meet a non-blind person in a public place who you've not met before, how would you describe yourself so that they could pick you out from the crowd?"

Another useful resource for organising events can be found at the Academy of Social Sciences EDI Hub: <https://acss.org.uk/esrc-project-equality-diversity-inclusion/edi-good-practice-for-organising-events/>

We're always looking to improve. Send us constructive feedback at EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk

Get Involved

Sign up to receive our newsletter, calls for participation and Flexible Fund: <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Subscription>

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