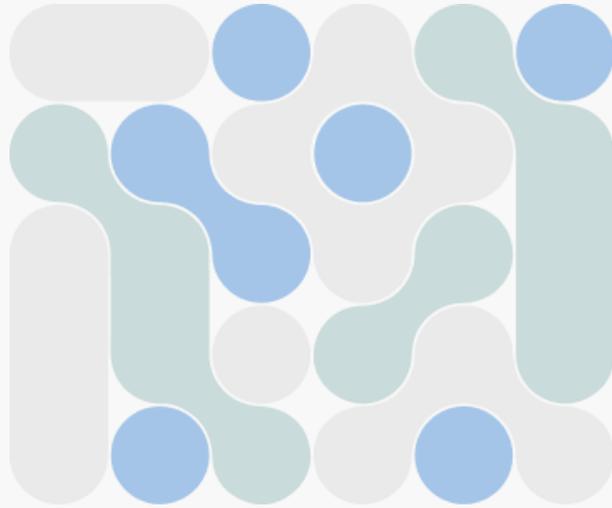


EDICa



EDICa Newsletter- Jul-Aug

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/2024-08>

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

- **Flexible Fund**
- **Call for Participants**
- **Workstream updates**
- **EDICa Seminars**
- **Catch us here...**
- **Spotlight on the field**
- **Spotlight on accessibility**

- **Get involved**
- **Our Funders**

Flexible Fund Announcements

Round 3- Organisation of Work and Enabling Workspaces

EDICa soft launched its final round of flexible funding worth approximately £335,000. 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** opened 15 July and **closes 30 September**. The call for applications formally opened on 5 August, with a deadline of 31 October. We carefully considered the impact of holidays and school term times in conjunction with EDICa's timeline constraints. Further information and details can be found on our website: <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund/>

We are conducting a drop-in information session on 17 September from 13:00-14:00 BST. This will be hosted on Zoom. You will wait in the waiting room and will be let into the virtual meeting room in the order you arrived (Zoom orders based on arrival). You can then have a private conversation with Prof James Richards and Prof Kate Sang with any questions you have about your proposal. Please register in advance by clicking on this link: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYvf-ytrjovGNAkRzQE38Pcv807GdSvkL8Y>

Round 2

We're delighted to announce 4 exciting new projects from the EDI Caucus' second Flexible Fund focusing on the research process and inequalities across the UK's research & innovation ecosystem. This work is supported by UKRI and the British Academy. Further information about our Flexible Fund can be found here: <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/edicas-flexible-fund-projects/>

'Breaking barriers in research funding applications: Evaluating narrative CVs and co-designing solutions for application processes' led by [Dr Fabio Fasoli](#) from [University of Surrey](#), with co-investigators [Dr Hannah Frith](#), [Dr Noelia Noël](#), and [Dr Susan Hutton](#) of University of Surrey, with partners [DORA \(Declaration on Research Assessment\) Group](#) and the [Institute for Sustainability at University of Surrey](#). Find out more at <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund-project-5/>

'REPAIR: Redesigned Equitable Processes for Inclusive Research Funding' led by [Dr Christin Henein](#) at [University College London](#), with co-investigators [Prof Aikaterini Fotopoulou](#), [Prof Anna Cox](#), [Dr Simona Aimar](#), [Dr Naaheed Mukadam](#), and [Dr Natalie Marchant](#) all at UCL. With partners [ALBA Network](#), the [British Neuroscience Association](#), The European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, the British Academy's Early Career Researcher Network, [Voices of Colour](#). Find out more at <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund-project-6/>

'In Their Own Time: Challenging conventional funding structures to include intersectionally underrepresented casualised academics' led by Dr Cecile Menard at the [University of Edinburgh](#), with co-investigator Dr Lena Wånggren at University of Edinburgh, with

illustrator Maria Stoian, with partners [UCU](#) (University & College Union) Anti-Casualisation Committee and UCU Edinburgh. Find out more at <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund-project-7/>

‘Is all publicity good publicity? Addressing Public Harassment in LGBT+ Research Impact’ led by Dr Tig Slater at [Sheffield Hallam University](#) with co-investigators Dr Charlotte Jones of Swansea University, Dr Rosie Nelson of University of Bristol, and [Amy Ryall](#) at the [Royal Central School of Speech and Drama](#), with partners [National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#) (NCCPE) and London Arts & Humanities Training Partnership (LAHP). Find out more at <https://edicaucus.ac.uk/flexible-fund-project-8/>

We appreciate the reviewers who contributed their time and expertise in supporting our review process. If you would like to be a reviewer for our final round of funding, [please click here to submit a form indicating your interest and level of expertise.](#)

Calls and updates

New mini-project: Disability Inclusive Careers in Engineering & science

A subset of the EDICa team have joined forces with chemist Dr Graeme Barker at Heriot-Watt University to work on an EPSRC Impact Acceleration Award project. The project, titled **Disability Inclusive Careers in Engineering & science (DICE)**, is led by Prof Kate Sang with Prof James Richards, Dr Barker, research assistant Beth Wedgwood, and project managed by Fenella Watson.

The team will spend the next 8 months taking research from EDICa, and predecessor projects like DISC (Disability Inclusive Science Careers funded by EPSRC) and EnDISC (Enabling Neurodiverse Inclusive Science Careers, funded by NERC), and develop, pilot and disseminate a toolkit to improve the employment experiences and outcome of disabled engineers’, scientists’ and



their employers/human resource teams' ability to support them. Whereas EDICa is focused on the research & innovation ecosystem, DICE will focus on industry.

If you work in industry and are interested in learning more, check out our webpage <https://go.hw.ac.uk/DICE> and get in touch with K.Sang@hw.ac.uk

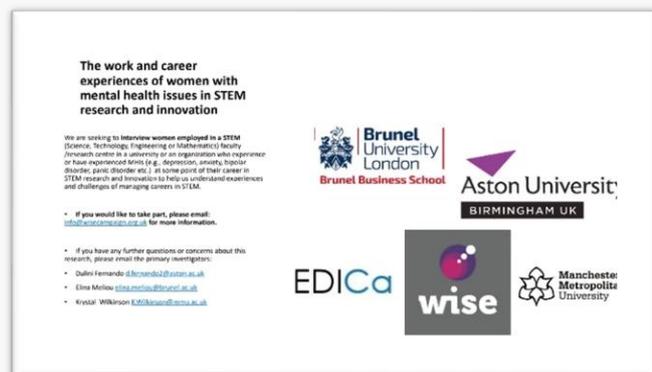
New EDICa website soon!



One of the main outputs for the EDICa project is a professional website hosting a library of resources. This library is called ERICa – Equity in Research & Innovation Careers. This will be an evolving and growing resource of evidence-based research and guidance for equality, diversity and inclusion. During the changeover process from the old, interim website at edicaucus.ac.uk to the professional replacement, the website may be unavailable. If you are struggling to access information, please refer to our social media sites or email us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk

Calls 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 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 view their campaign webpage: <https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/aston-university-research-project-lived-experiences-of-women-in-stem-with-mental-health-issues/> or email info@wisecampaign.org.uk for more information.

Postgraduate researcher, Gabrielle Goodrich, (who spoke in our February seminar on menstrual health at work) seeks hospitality workers who experience problematic menstruation. Participants must be at least 18, have worked in a customer-facing role in UK hospitality (e.g. restaurant, bar, cafe, club) for at least 3 months within the last 3 years, and experienced menstrual periods found to be painful, heavy or difficult to manage while at work.

If you or someone you know could participate, the contact is GG2019@hw.ac.uk



Workstream Updates

The Career- Life Cycle

From October 2023 to March 2024, EDICa interviewed 56 people working in research & innovation about their experience of managing menstrual health at work. Out of that group, 16 disclosed that they are neurodivergent, of whom 12 also reported having a long-term condition or disability. From this study, EDICa has written a report specifically on improving support for neurodivergent women managing their menstrual health. The topic has been overlooked in the literature and research on work and employment. The report reviews the existing peer reviewed literature and presents findings from our in-depth interviews. The report offers some practical recommendations for managers to improve workplace support for neurodivergent women. To view and download the report, click here: <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/NeurodiverseMH>



We acknowledge and thank the people we interviewed for their time and openness in sharing their experiences, without which this research would not have been possible.

The Research Process

Workstream 2 led the second round of Flexible Funding, with projects chosen to complement the research already undertaken by the research team. Postdocs in the workstream were able to gain experience with reviewing proposals.

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.

EDICa held an initial exploratory discussion on the issues of demand management (DM) on 19 July, with ten attendees primarily from Research Officers in Scotland and England. A 6-page summary will be available on our new website once it is live.

The discussion surfaced a number of useful insights including ...

- The importance of pre-planning for annual calls which enables
 - The assignment of lead academics to coordinate and to nurture interest in a more diverse group of applicants
 - The use of mentoring, shadowing, observer roles over more than one annual cycle to better prepare high quality applications from under-represented communities
- DM often intersects with institutional strategy/priorities in ways which are largely invisible to funders, but which will skew investment decisions at discipline/infrastructure level rather than at individual level. (For example, if a university is investing in a new area of research with new staff hired and new equipment bought, they may choose a project from this area instead of another.)
- The importance of feedback, particularly to unsuccessful applicants to a DM process
- The use of novel approaches (such as flash presentations) to mitigate reputational and career stage biases. Allowing only 3 minutes to present an idea prevents a recitation of titles and awards from an experienced academic in a brainstorming session.

We are looking to recruit diarists to participate in a study of DM to gather and evaluate views of what works and why. If you would be willing to participate in this study, please contact us 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).

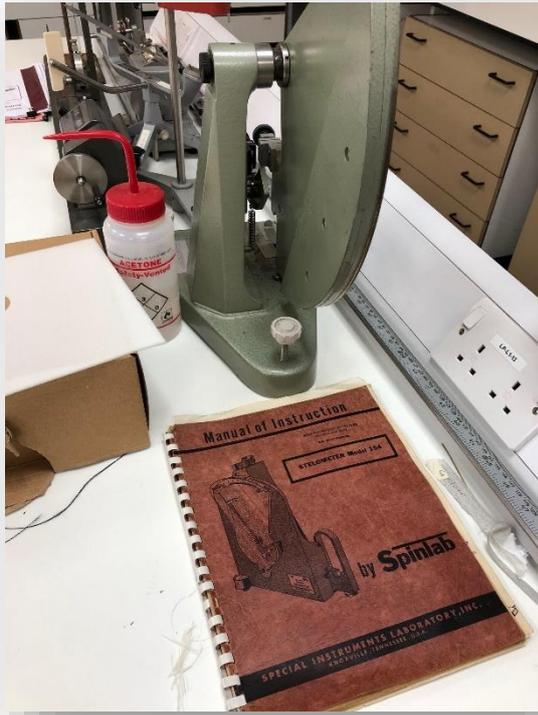
As part of our study looking into Covid-19's impact on the UK's research and innovation career, EDICa will shortly announce a call for interview participants to discuss how to make the workplace more enabling and accessible. If you're interested in participating, email us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk.

EDICa continued with more visits to places where research happens in the UK. Prof Kate Sang, Prof James Richards, Dr Nima Ali and Fenella Watson travelled down to Galashiels in the Scottish Borders to visit Heriot-Watt University's School of Textiles and Design. There, we found technology from prior centuries including the spinning wheel and the loom, in addition to modern technology like the spinning of nanofibers (which was, understandably, difficult to photograph, and therefore [click here to view an illustration that indicates what it is](#)) using electricity to create spider-web-like fibres to wrap around a normal thread .

Research takes place in laboratories looking at dyes, threads, and fabrics. In a room with a controlled temperature and humidity level, there were tools for conducting tensile testing, abrasion testing, and drape. How many of us think about the research & innovation that went into the clothes we wear?

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

Click on the photos to view in larger format in a slideshow



1 - A stelometer, which measures strength-elongation characteristics. The machine appears to date to the 1950s or 60s.



2 - A fume hood in the chemistry lab.



3 - One of only two looms which is semi-computerised and enables the user to sit down. It still requires someone to thread the loom with manual dexterity and ability to access the loom.



4 - A quiet room is available on the campus, shared with Borders College.

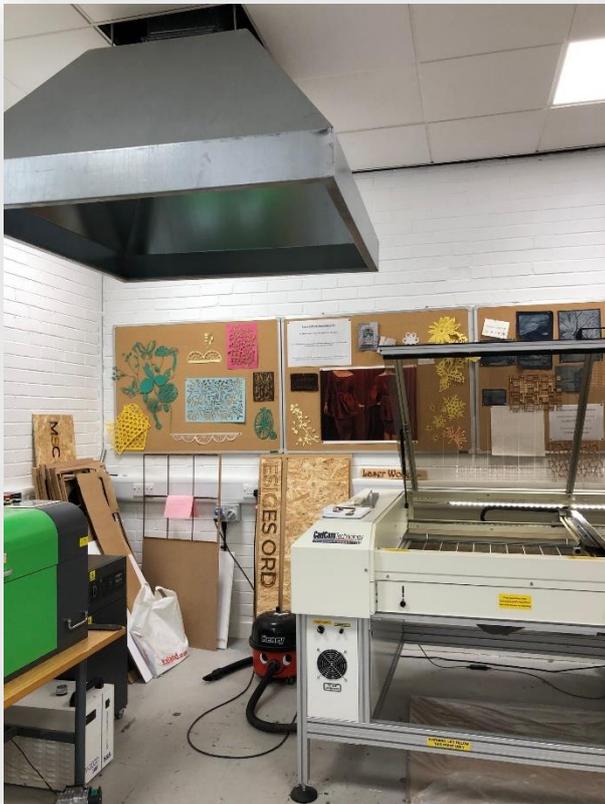
5 - The sewing room has more than 50 sewing machines, which can make a loud din when operating at the same time. There's little natural light and adjustability of the tables.



6 - A more traditional loom, which has the advantage of having parts that can be manufactured to replace. The noise of many of these looms operating in one open space can be problematic, and noise-protection is advised.

7 - Spools of yarns and threads are stacked on shelves, requiring a step ladder for the upper shelves. Signs plead with students not to stand on swivel chairs to reach up high.

8 - A laser cutter interfacing with a computer enables people to create products from plastic or MDF (a composite wood) up to a certain thickness. It can also create beautiful, intricate paper designs, or create a picture using laser engraving (where the laser burns the material but does not cut through).



9 - The technician demonstrating the laser cutting machine created a souvenir of EDICa's logo on an offcut piece of MDF, using both laser engraving and cutting techniques. The team were blessed with some passing sunshine on their walk over the River Tweed toward the train station. The trainline was newly reopened in 2016 after being controversially closed in 1969, as part of the Beeching cuts.

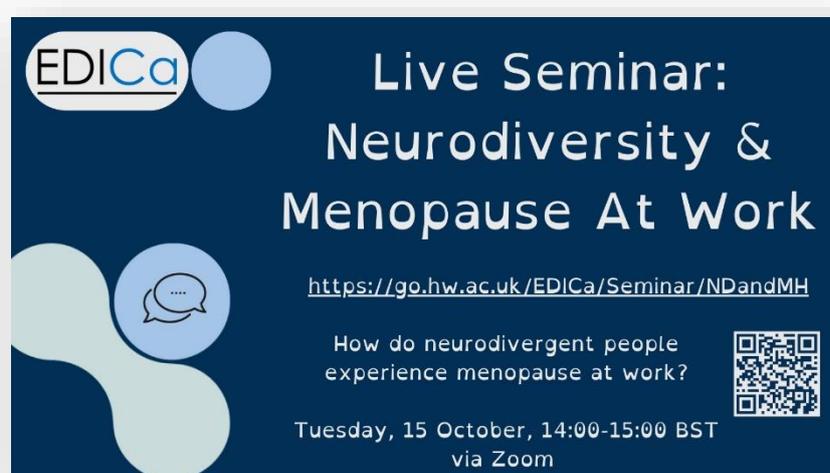
EDICa Seminars

Seminar: 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 continue to work on identifying a time that works for the panellists and interpreters, and will advertise this as soon as a date is identified.

Seminar: Menopause and Neurodiversity At Work- 15 October

With World Menopause Day coming up on 18 October, we will be presenting our latest research findings in an online seminar on Tuesday, 15 October from 14:00-15:00 BST. Prof Kate Sang, Chiara Cocco, and Beth Wedgwood will speak to how employers can better support neurodivergent women managing (peri)menopause at work.



Our seminars are recorded and published on our YouTube channel and on our website.

To register, <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Seminar/NDandMH> Let us know asap if you require a BSL interpreter.

Spotlight on the field

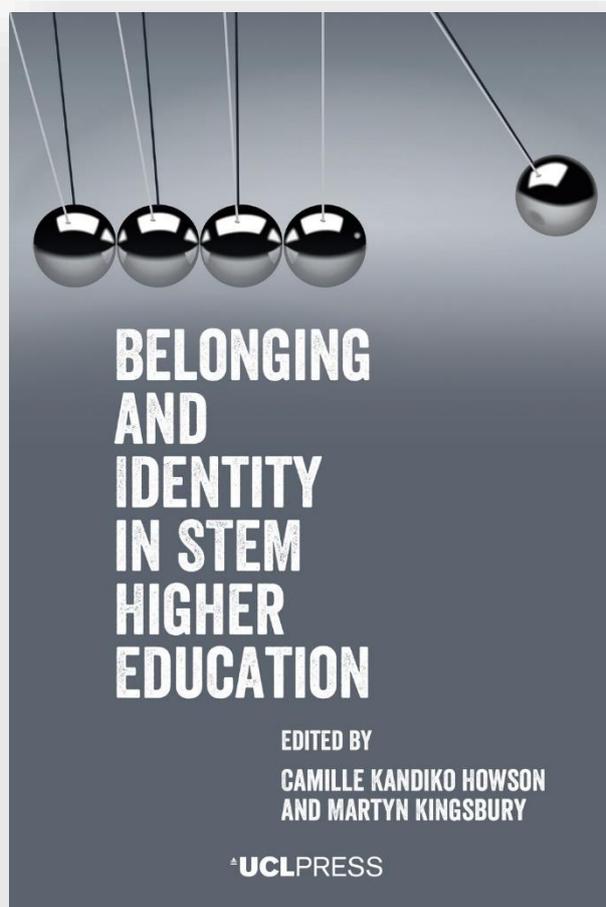
Belonging and Identity in STEM Higher Education- open access book

In the free open access book published in July, *Belonging and Identity in STEM Higher Education* edited by Camille Kandiko Howson and Martyn Kingsbury, "leading scholars, teachers, practitioners and students explore belonging and identity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields..." Chapters touch on an intersectional approach, barriers for racially minoritised students, the influence of stereotypes, a look at belonging and identity of disabled, chronically ill or neurodivergent scientists, plus several chapters focusing on the student experience and belonging and identity. You can review the full list of chapter titles, an abstract and the link to the full article to download free by clicking here:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.10860920>

Howson & Kingsbury write in their first chapter that "in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields with positivist approaches [meaning the use of concise impersonal discussion, absent of human feelings or subjective interpretation] and a focus on numerical data, there can be assumptions that the disciplines are unemotional and impersonal. The need for mathematical competency, logical thinking and disciplinary contexts can be barriers to engagement and belonging in STEM. The detailed narrative is not centred on people, as it is in many social science and humanities fields, and this can marginalise the individual." Stereotypical characteristics of STEM fields (e.g. the isolated geek), can also "make it easier for some individuals to identify with these fields and can help them feel part of a scientific community. ...[I]ndividuals can be supported, with ways of thinking and being that connect people despite where they came from, how they speak or how they dress." They touch on how there can be

[From the abstract:]

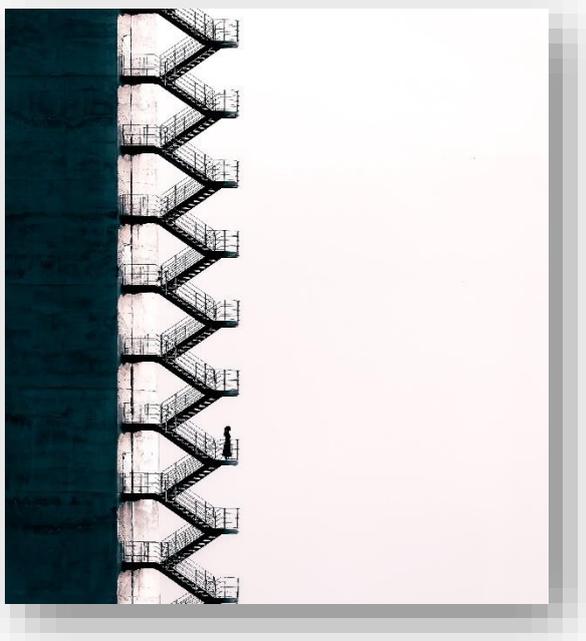


"STEM ways of thinking, such as those underpinning abstract and complex mathematics, can form the basis for new ways of conceptualising belonging for both staff and students, going beyond socio-demographic and cultural differences. In this book, chapters and case study contributions analyse what is unique about STEM educational environments for staff and students in the UK, Ireland, Europe, Scandinavia and Asia. The authors examine the role of STEM pedagogies in facilitating belonging, variable impacts across student characteristics and the experiences STEM students face in their higher education experiences. **It provides a valuable resource for those working in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), STEM educational researchers and practitioners, as well as offering insights for academics and teachers in STEM higher education.**"

https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/220550?utm_source=Jiscmail&utm_medium=Listserv+&utm_campaign=UCL24MC857J

"Hearing the voices of care-experienced academics"

Diversity and inclusion research & innovation is about more than just the protected characteristics. There's also geographical diversity (dominance of south-east UK) and generational diversity. This blog by Neil Harrison and Simon Benham-Clarke looks at care-experienced academics representation and experience at work. They explain that care-experienced means people "who spent time in the care of the state during childhood, usually due to neglect or trauma within their birth family. It includes, for example, those who spent time in foster care or children's homes."



Harrison and Benham-Clarke conducted a study to "seek out and foreground voices of care-experienced academics". They spoke to 21 academics. The blog is short and readable, covering precarity and lack of the family safety nets; imposter syndrome, rejection and belonging; and whether to disclose their background or not.

Unsurprisingly, Harrison and Benham-Clarke conclude that academia's precarity disproportionately impacts "those with the flimsiest safety nets". They also reference "additional social and emotional work required to negotiate authentic identities".

Read the full blog post here:

<https://srheblog.com/2024/07/16/hearing-the-voices-of-care-experienced-academics/>

Event: Empowering Inclusion, 26 September 18:30

Delve into strategies for fostering inclusive work environments at this hybrid event hosted by LSE's The Inclusion Initiative. Joining online is free. The event is titled **Empowering Inclusion: Supporting Managers to Enhance Socio-Economic Diversity through VOICE**.

It takes place Thursday 26 September 2024 6.30pm to 7.45pm BST

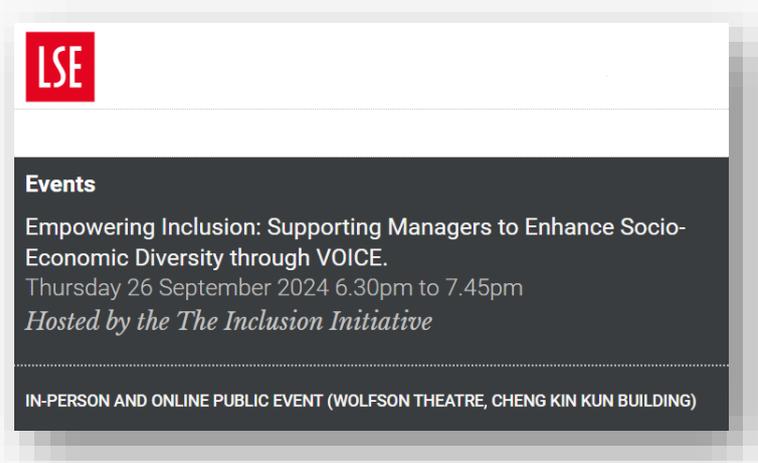
VOICE stands for: **V**oice and Visibility, **O**pen-mindedness, **I**nclusion, **C**hance of Success, **E**mpowerment

"Co-authored by Nikita and Dr Grace Lordan, our latest report, VOICE, scrutinises the barriers and opportunities encountered by employees from lower socio-economic backgrounds. It presents actionable steps for individuals, managers, and organisations to mitigate these barriers, promoting the career advancement and retention of these employees.

"Join us for an enlightening discussion on the VOICE report's findings. This event will equip attendees with practical tools and insights to foster inclusion and support colleagues from lower socio-economic backgrounds throughout their professional journey. Learn actionable strategies to dismantle barriers and cultivate a more equitable work environment for everyone."

Find out more about the speakers and register by clicking on this link:

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/tii/events/2024-25/Empowering-inclusion>



Spotlight on accessibility

A targeted fellowship - an example of good practice in supporting disabled researchers in funding calls

On 3 September 2024, the Royal Society opened a call for proposals to its Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship. According to their website, "Dorothy Hodgkin was awarded the 1964 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for solving the atomic structure of molecules such as penicillin and insulin, using X-ray crystallography. Generous, humble and hard-working throughout her half-century long career, she was undeterred by the rheumatoid arthritis that affected her from her late twenties."

The Royal Society explains that the fellowship "offers a recognised first step into an independent research career for outstanding early career scientists who require a flexible working pattern due to personal circumstances, such as caring responsibilities and/or health-related conditions."



Scrolling down the call's website <https://royalsociety.org/grants/dorothy-hodgkin-fellowship/> there is a section on Support for disabled applicants which holds some good practice suggestions:

"Adjustments can include, but are not limited to:

- Extension of the deadline
- Additional support to complete the application form
- Receiving the application form in a different format, such as on a Word document
- Support during interviews as required, including technical support for candidates requiring accessibility software or services
- Additional costs that candidates may incur on account of their particular disability to attend an interview"

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, sans-serif font. A thick black horizontal line is positioned below the text.

Funders of the EDI Caucus

