

EDICa Newsletter- May-Jun 2025

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Calls for participants

Bullying & Sexual Harassment in the UK's research & innovation sector

EDICa is conducting a survey across industry, charity, government and academia looking at bullying & sexual harassment in the UK's research and innovation sector. The survey is open to all job types, including PhD students, and takes about 10-20 minutes to complete. Please share widely. <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Bullying&SH-Survey>



EDICa to edit a Special Issue of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion: an international journal.

Bias in the peer-review of research funding bids: causes and remedies

EDICa's Prof Robert MacIntosh is leading a team of editors supporting a special issue of the Emerald Publishing's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: an international journal**. The team also includes Dr Stefanie Schneider, Dr Dong Lin, Prof Kate Sang, Prof Jemina Napier and Prof James Richards.

This will be a great opportunity to draw attention to an important but under-researched topic. Research funding is increasingly important both to individuals and to institutions, yet it is increasingly competitive.



We're looking for submissions that think through the barriers that faces researchers as they apply for external funds ... and just as importantly, we're keen to hear what can be done to help overcome those barriers.

Have a look at the Call for Papers ([linked here](#)) and think about putting in a paper. Deadline **30 November 2025**.

Call for participants: Black nursing academics in non-Russell group universities



The poster is for the FAIR Nursing Study, a project by EDICa and the University of Staffordshire. It is titled 'FAIR Nursing Study' in a red box. Below the title, it asks 'Are you a Black nursing academic? We want to hear from you!'. The poster is divided into two main sections: 'About the study' and 'How to Participate'. The 'About the study' section explains that the project aims to understand barriers to conducting research among Black nursing academics in non-Russell group universities and to shape recommendations for a more inclusive research environment. The 'How to Participate' section states that interested individuals should complete an electronic expression of interest form and review a participant information sheet. Two QR codes are provided: one for the 'Expression of interest form' and another for the 'Participant Information Sheet'. At the bottom, contact information for Dr Yetunde Ataiyero is provided.

EDICa University of Staffordshire

FAIR Nursing Study

**Are you a Black nursing academic?
We want to hear from you!**

About the study

We are seeking to understand the barriers to conducting research among Black nursing academics in non-Russell group universities. Your insights will help shape recommendations that aim to foster a more inclusive research environment.

How to Participate

If you are interested in taking part, please complete our electronic expression of interest form and review the participant information sheet.

Expression of interest form
<https://forms.office.com/e/G87DCb0mgT>

Participant Information Sheet
<https://www.cloud.microsoft/Env0AN4ig#DDppm?ref=Link>

For queries or more information, contact Dr Yetunde Ataiyero: yetunde.ataiyero@staffs.ac.uk

Dr Yetunde Ataiyero of the University of Staffordshire leads one of EDICa's Flexible Fund projects looking at the barriers to conducting research among Black nursing academics in non-Russell group universities. The project seeks to "identify and co-create pragmatic recommendations likeliest to be effective given barriers identified by study participants."

Support this work by sharing with your networks the call for participants, seeking Black nursing academics in non-Russell group universities.

<http://forms.office.com/e/G87DCb0mgT>

Call for participants: Black female academics in UK universities involved in hybrid working

An EDICa Flexible Fund project led by Dr Tinkuma Ejovi Edafioghor of the University of the West of England is exploring how hybrid working models shape the productivity and visibility of Black women academics in higher education following the Covid-19 pandemic. While hybrid work arrangements offer flexibility, they also raise critical questions about professional recognition, career progression, and inclusion within academic spaces.

The project is seeking to conduct one-hour online interviews with Black female researchers and academics working at UK universities who have experience of hybrid working. Further information [linked here](#).

Academics involved in REF assessment units and UK Higher Education HR and policy professionals

An EDICa Flexible Fund project led by Dr Hadar Elraz of the University of Swansea is looking at gender and mental health conditions in the UK's higher education sector. (You can read more about the study on our webpage, [linked here](#).) As part of that study they are conducting three focus groups. If you fit into one of these categories, please sign up to participate in a one-off online focus group lasting from 60-75 minutes.

- policy professionals with experience of working in the UK's higher education sector - [click here](#)
- academics of any gender with experience of managing elements of the REF process - [click here](#)
- HR professionals with experience of working in UKHE - [click here](#)

In each of the three focus groups, the project will share emerging findings from interviews already conducted, and work to identify how academia can become more enabling for these workers.

Call for participants: Black or Black mixed-race people who have done any EDI work since May 2020

Dr. Kuī Mackay, Director of Research and Development at BRK Ujima, a Black feminist-led organisation working to dismantle systems of inequality and oppression, has shared their latest project that sits at the intersection of three of their core activities: interdisciplinary research, cultivating inclusion, equity and belonging in the workplace, and supporting Black wellness.



The project aims to centre and amplify the voices of Black people doing EDI work in the UK, with a particular focus on how anti-Blackness shows up in this work. Since 2020 - the year of the so-called “racial reckoning” - they are exploring what that moment set in motion, what has changed since, and what is happening now. They are also looking ahead, seeking to understand what support Black people need, and how BRK Ujima can help.

They seek people who identify as Black or Black mixed-race and who have done EDI work at any point between May 2020 and the present to complete an anonymous survey. They're taking a broad and inclusive view of what EDI work includes (formal or informal, paid or unpaid). Participation is voluntary, anonymous, and all responses will be kept confidential. To take part, please visit: <https://bit.ly/BlackEDI>

Please feel free to share this with others who may be eligible. For any questions or to discuss the research further, contact kui@brkujima.com.

Evaluating AI's impact on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in HR

Are you a professional with experience in:

- AI/Data Science in HR
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
- Recruitment or workforce planning
- Algorithmic decision-making in HR processes

Dr Siddhartha Saxena (EDICa postdoctoral researcher) is inviting diverse professionals — especially women, neurodivergent, and disabled individuals — to share insights in a 45-minute interview. Complete the short eligibility survey: [Survey Link](#). Recent Delphi studies show real concerns about how algorithms affect inclusive HR practices — your voice matters.

Questions? Contact: s.s.saxena@hw.ac.uk

Call for researchers with experience of pregnancy and fertility journeys to be shadowed in fieldwork

Dr Chiara Cocco, EDICa postdoctoral researcher, is looking for researchers based in the UK (or have been in the past), who have experience of **pregnancy** (including miscarriage and fertility journeys) during their research career. She is particularly interested in the experiences of those conducting non desk-based research (e.g., fieldwork, lab work) to learn how they negotiated being pregnant and/or caring for a young child with a career.

As part of this project, **Chiara is looking to shadow a field trip taking place in the UK** in the next few months. As a social scientist, she is seeking to experience the challenges that working in the field poses, including the preparation and risk assessment. She has a small budget to support this. If you are able to put Chiara in touch with a lead of an upcoming field trip of one to two days, please email C.Cocco@hw.ac.uk

EDICa seeks people who have sat on research funding panels - including panellists, chairs, conveners and observers.

As part of our study on the research process, participants can choose a one-hour online interview or to submit a 5-10 minute video or audio recording. Prompt questions will be provided to guide reflections on experiences with funding assessment panels.

Contact edicaucus@hw.ac.uk to express interest and request more information.

Mentoring of early career researchers

Dr Stefanie Schneider, EDICa postdoctoral researcher, seeks 5-10 minute reflections - audio files or text - about ***your experiences as an early career researcher and the types of support and mentorship you received.***

What obstacles did you encounter, positive experiences, practices you think should be more widely offered, guidance you retrospectively realised was missing or actually was helpful.

We know that minoritised researchers are less likely to be “in the know” for time-sensitive career opportunities. Mentors and champions play a crucial role in guiding early career researchers through a complex landscape with many different and often opaque routes that can lead to a rewarding career. Stefanie is conducting a study to understand what forms of support and mentorship early career researchers evaluate as helpful. This study seeks to establish what initiatives could break patterns of privilege and reach more early career researchers that are often left out.

If you have any questions or would like to participate, contact EDICa postdoctoral researcher, Dr Stefanie Schneider at Stefanie.schneider@uws.ac.uk.

Update from EDICa Flexible Fund 3 Project: DALE (Disability Access in Laboratory Environments)

Starting in June 2025, the DALE project aims to develop tools to assess and report the accessibility of laboratories, and pilot these across facilities at four universities in the Eastern ARC Research Consortium. These form an essential step towards the ultimate goal of embedding accessibility as a core part of the practice of science, in the same way that health & safety and sustainability are.

“My lab broke me, I hope others are better”

This response to our 2023 survey summed up the situation for many disabled scientists today. This needs to change. Our focus is on providing effective tools so that everyone can feel confident and empowered to make science as accessible as possible.

We very much value input from anyone who feels they have something to contribute, and will be seeking comments on our draft accessibility toolkit from mid-August.

Bookmark www.accessingbrilliance.org to find details of our group’s research, or contact m.gauntlett@uea.ac.uk or b.burrill@uea.ac.uk if you’d like to know more.



Workstream Updates

The Career- Life Cycle

EDICa's Workstream 1 is entering the evaluation and outputs phase. The team continues to work with animators to create comic strips and other visual outputs in a variety of learning medium. It's also conference season and EDICa's researchers have been attending conferences

One of our test sites - a research institute with a high percentage of staff and students spending time in the field - has deployed a Menstrual Field Pack, with contents like spare tampons, pads and underpants in a few sizes. Take up and usage of the kit is being monitored for evaluation. If your team or department already has such a kit in use, or you would like to consult with us on what can go into such a kit, please contact c.cocco@hw.ac.uk.

EDICa's research on menstrual health was recently picked up by Chemistry World magazine ([linked here](#)), the latest in a number of articles in more mainstream and

also trade presses. "We know that menstrual health and menopause are still quite stigmatised topics, so there needs to be more awareness and openness,' says [Dr] Chiara Cocco, a postdoctoral researcher at Heriot-Watt University, UK".

The logo for Chemistry World, featuring the words "CHEMISTRY" and "WORLD" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, separated by a stylized double-slash symbol. The logo is set against a black rectangular background.

The Research Process

Assessment Panels

Workstream 2 continues to conduct interviews with individuals who have served on assessment panels with funders inside and outside of the UK. The study seeks to establish what EDI challenges have been noticed, how participants make sense of these and what practices have been effective in making the assessment process more inclusive. The collected insights will inform a good practice report that will be shared with a consortium of funders as well as with the research and innovation sector more widely.

If you have recently been part of an assessment panel and would like to share your thoughts on EDI challenges and good practice, you can still get in touch with us over the summer. Email edicaucus@hw.ac.uk to receive further information and arrange a short 30 minute interview with one of our researchers.

EDI Training

EDICa's project where we take a cohort of "Equity Champions" and conduct training in various aspects of EDI continues, with the penultimate training session "Neurodiversity in the workplace" given by EDICa's own Prof Kate Sang and Prof James Richards.

The session included research undertaken by the NERC-funded EnDISC project (report [linked here](#)), the Scottish Government-funded project on 'An Intersectional Fair Work Framework for the Autistic Workforce' (report [linked here](#)), and EDICa's work on menstrual health and neurodiversity (report [linked here](#)).

The final of the Equity Champions training series is scheduled for September 2025. Following completion of the training sessions, the research team will co-design a report on effective EDI training.

Demand Management

EDICa also continues to conduct research on EDI in demand management with three separate studies. Demand management refers to situations where funders anticipate high levels of interest in a funding call and therefore implement controls at the institutional level by limiting a university to only a certain number of applications. In response, institutions establish an internal pre-submission selection process to determine which proposals will be submitted. While our EDICa evidence review ([linked here](#)) found that demand management is less researched than other aspects of the funding cycle, there have been several developments in this space recently. See for example EPSRC's report ([linked here](#)) on following roundtables the council has organised.

EDICa is collaborating with the Oxford Forum on Equity and Inclusivity in Research Funding ([linked here](#)) to build an evidence base of EDI challenges in demand management as observed by research managers and administrators. [Linked here](#) is a recent article written by the leaders of the Demand Management Coordination Working Group.

EDICa is also working with the [MillionPlus Association](#) and other younger and smaller research institutions and the challenges they face in setting up internal selection processes and in applying for external funding.

If you have managed or are currently working on internal selection processes or research support in a smaller research institutions and would like to share challenges you have experiences, please get in touch with us at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk to arrange an interview.

EDICa will also shortly share a call for a focus group aimed at researchers who have recently gone through a demand management process as an applicant. Keep an eye out!

The Organisation of Work

EDICa launches a nationwide survey on bullying & harassment in the research & innovation sector

In 2023, EDICa conducted a broad survey looking at the impact of the pandemic on EDI in the R&I sector. The findings from a limited dataset specifically on bullying and sexual harassment indicated high levels across the sector, especially for protected groups, and that bullying and sexual harassment seemed to increase after the pandemic. You can read about this in our report [linked here](#). Two years on, EDICa is conducting a focused survey on bullying and harassment, to assess where we are now.

You can help by sharing our call widely through your networks.

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Bullying&SH-Survey>

EDICa the EDI Caucus is funded by **UKRI** UK Research and Innovation **The British Academy**

SURVEY

Bullying & Sexual Harassment in the UK's research & innovation sector


Have you **witnessed** bullying or sexual harassment?

Have you **experienced** bullying or sexual harassment?

- Anyone employed in UK's research & innovation sector (including postgrad research students)
- All job types - techs, innovators, researchers, research leaders, R&I managers, administrators, PhD students.
- All sectors - industry, academia, charity, government
- 10-20 minutes to complete

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Bullying&SH-Survey>

Closing 15 August



The [Lyell Centre for Earth & Marine Science and Technology](#) is one of Heriot-Watt University's Global Research Institutes, and is home to EDICa co-investigator and biogeochemist, Dr Clay Magill. EDICa had visited the Lyell Centre in April 2024, focusing on its marine biology, microbiology and biogeochemistry laboratories. In June 2025, we were invited back for a tour of the newly revamped office spaces.

The transformation of the open-plan office space was lovely to behold, and included changes like painting walls from bright white to a mid-grey, living plants on top of storage cabinets, noise-reducing baffling, improved flooring to reduce footstep sounds, speakers broadcasting a low-level white noise, and different size pods for individual quiet working or teleconferences or small meetings.

The redesign involved a lot of consultation with the users of the space, especially disabled staff and postgraduate researchers. One area specifically designed to address needs of neurodivergent users has a lower density of desks, screening to reduce visual distraction, and dimmable overhead lights. Reaction from users has been positive.

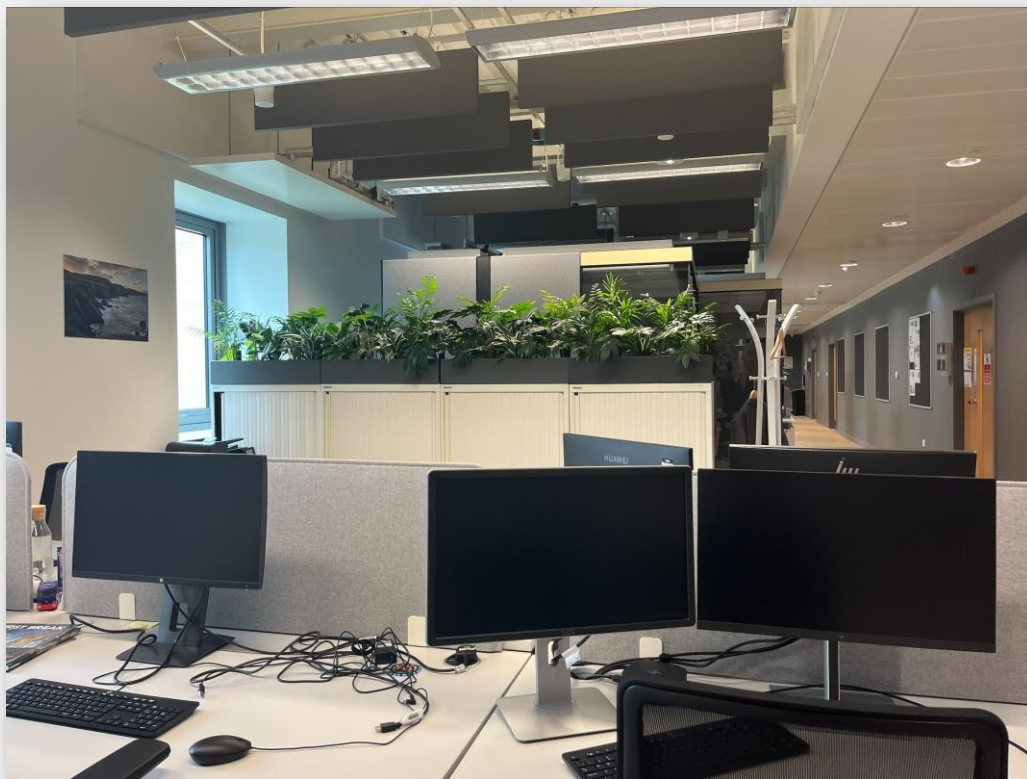
Prior to the renovation, senior academic staff had offices which were open at the ceiling, providing separation but no privacy. Now, everyone has the same desk space in the open plan area - from the two co-directors to the masters students, but there are more spaces to retreat to for quiet working, meetings and privacy.



1 - Office area designed for neurodivergent researchers, with reduced density, adjustable lighting, and increased screens



2 - Small meeting pod



3 - Open plan area with planting, grey walls, small white speaker hanging from ceiling with white noise, and improved flooring

EDICa Seminars

Upcoming

Literature Review and Black Women Academics' Experience

“A dearth of literature exists on Black women academics’ experience in UK universities. This lacunae in research mirrors the lived experiences of many Black women academics: feeling silenced whilst simultaneously experiencing the strain of hypervisibility in their academic roles.” So write Dr Yaz Osho and Dr Naomi Alormele in their article “Negotiated spaces: black women academics’ experiences in UK universities” (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01279-x>), which reviews literature in the field and identifies several points for action for the higher education sector. Join us on 4 September 13:00-14:00 on Zoom to learn more.

Register here: <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Seminar/LitReview>



Co-production in the Context of Neurodiversity



Co-design and co-production is at the heart of EDICa's change model. In this seminar, Prof Almuth McDowall of Birkbeck, University of London, will talk about the joys and challenges of engaging in co-production with neurodivergent workers during all stages of the research cycle. She will draw on her practice-focused research with Neurodiversity in Business, her policy-focused research for [Acas](#) [the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service] and also ongoing projects which are not yet published. Almuth will talk about the methods used, the

insights gleaned, the challenges faced as

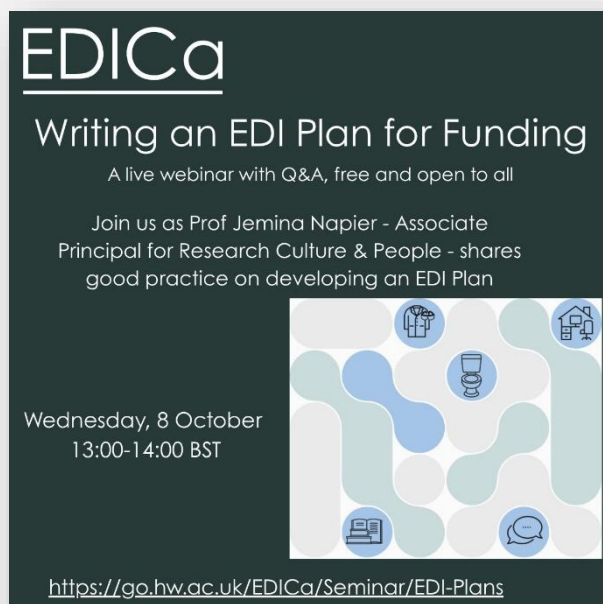
well as surprising feedback from research funders. There will be ample opportunity for questions. Join us on 2 October 13:00 on Zoom - register here:

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Seminar/Co-production>

Writing an EDI Plan for Funding

Funders are increasingly requiring researchers applying for funding to demonstrate commitment and actions on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and to embed EDI plans into their research design. This could include aspects like accessibility, recruitment, and governance, but could also include the research methods themselves and make-up of the research team. Who is being included as research participants and how are their needs being anticipated?

On 8 October 13:00, Prof Jemina Napier, Associate Principal for Research Culture & People and a leading researcher in sign language communication and access, will share good practice for developing EDI Plans. Register here <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Seminar/EDI-Plans>



Recordings

Covid-19's impact on Research & Innovation Careers: the good, the bad, & the ugly

On 7 May, EDICa shared findings from our research into understanding how the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns impacted the careers of different people in the UK's research & innovation sector. If you missed it, you can see the recording and/or look at the slides [here](#). You can see the full report here:

Richards, J, Sang, K, Saxena, S, Canduela, J, Wedgwood, B & Collins, J 2024, **The Covid-19 pandemic: What has been the impact on equality, diversity and inclusion in the UK research and innovation ecosystem?** Heriot-Watt University.

<https://doi.org/10.17861/9618-X577>

Social Network Analysis

A case study in using publication metrics and network analysis to study gender diversity and publication activity in STEM in the UK.

Social network analysis (SNA) is the process of investigating social structures through the use of networks and graph theory. Examples include business networks, kinship, disease transmission, and social networks. On **11 June**, [Dr Yasaman Sarabi](#) shared this method, with particular attention to gender diversity and inter-organisational collaboration. The recording and the slides can be found, [linked here](#).

Using AI to Transform EDI Research - recording

A case study of how an AI tool can enable a more inclusive approach to qualitative analysis.

[The Autonomy Institute](#) is a data-driven research and consultancy not-for-profit, focusing on work and climate, who are co-investigators on the EDI Caucus. Scribe is Autonomy's in-house AI tool designed to transform how researchers engage with unstructured text data from surveys, interviews, and consultations—making it especially powerful for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) research. By clustering responses, identifying emergent themes, and quantifying qualitative patterns, Scribe allows researchers to surface insights from diverse voices at scale while maintaining traceability back to original responses. In this session, we'll demonstrate how Scribe could enable a more inclusive approach to qualitative analysis—supporting mixed-methods research, participatory studies, and intersectional inquiry by removing bottlenecks in processing and interpretation. Rather than replacing the researcher, Scribe augments their work—expanding what's possible in EDI-focused empirical inquiry.

The recording, the slides, and the transcript from the 13 May seminar can be found, [linked here](#).

Spotlight on the field

Best practice and interventions for accessible fieldwork

The Royal Geographical Society held a regional event in the Northeast of England on 3 March on "Best practice and interventions for accessible fieldwork", featuring talks from Dr Becky McCerery, Dr Briony Carlin, Dr Laura Braunholtz and Ashmika Motee. Ashmika is a PhD student under Prof Kate Sang, closely aligned with EDICa's work.

The event was recorded and can be watched by going to this link:

<https://www.rgs.org/events/talks-on-demand/best-practice-and-interventions-for-accessible-fieldwork>

The sound at times from the audience can be muffled but the speakers are audible and the slides perfectly clear.

During fieldwork or trips in the outdoors, accessing necessary knowledge and information on going to the bathroom and dealing with menstruation is often dependent on knowing other menstruating people who have been into the field themselves. It also relies on frank conversations between people who are comfortable enough to ask -and answer- those questions. A new hire or student going to the field for the first time might not know who to ask or how to advocate for things they need.

Fieldwork in remote environments can also present other barriers to inclusion, particularly for marginalised groups. Gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic background are all rarely considered within fieldwork planning, yet present heightened risks to the safety of participants.

This session will cover best practice and positive interventions for fieldwork, with a focus on menstruation and on other barriers to inclusive fieldwork practice. We will finish with an open floor panel discussion and a chance to brainstorm best practice ideas.

Research on the Review Process

The Research on Research Institute is conducting a study on "Desk Rejection" ([linked here](#)) - the practice of removing from the review process at an early stage any applications deemed non-competitive.

The RoRI recently published a Guide to Distributed Peer Review - "a model in which applicants to a funding call also serve as reviewers for that call. Each applicant is required to review proposals from other applicants, creating a scalable, reciprocal system of assessment." Read more by [clicking here](#).

Neurodivergent PhD student experience - blog

Professor Inger Mewburn, Director of Researcher Development at The Australian National University, wrote a blog "What the experience of neurodivergent PhD students teaches us, and why it makes me angry" ([linked here](#)). The article touches on barriers that keep neurodivergent-friendly changes from taking hold, like resource scarcity, administrative inertia, the myth of meritocracy, and unexamined neurodivergence among supervisors. This latter section contains six types of supervisor - the hyperfocuser, the process pedant, the talker, the context-switching avoider, the novelty-chaser, and the theoretical purist. Prof Mewburn posits that it's "the lack of self-reflection, coupled with the power dynamics that can make things toxic."

She finishes: "If you're a supervisor, maybe take a good hard look at your own quirky work habits before deciding your student is 'difficult'. And if you're in university management, please, for the love of research, let's work on not making neurodivergent students jump through flaming bureaucratic hoops to get basic support."

Toolkit for addressing harassment and sexual misconduct experienced by postgraduate researchers

The 1752 Group have published a toolkit for higher education institutions setting out what the new Office for Students' regulatory requirements mean for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and supervisors. Dr Anna Bull wrote a comment piece about the toolkit in Nature:

"From 1 August, England's national regulator for higher education, the Office for Students, will require institutions to protect students from harassment or sexual misconduct.... [PhD students] are more likely to be targeted by staff members, both at their institution and outside it. This is partly because of their close relationship with advisers and mentors, and partly because of academia's deeply hierarchical, gender-unequal culture.... We urge universities to adopt a three-pronged approach. First, prevent harassment from happening. ... Second, respond immediately to harassment. ... Third, provide long-term support for individuals and groups." Read the article ([linked here](#)) for further information, and view the toolkit linked here: <https://1752group.com/pgrs/>

The 1752 Group is a UK-based research and lobby organisation working to end sexual misconduct in higher education. In 2015, Goldsmiths, University of London allocated just £1,752 for the first-ever conference on sexual misconduct in higher education - hence the name. "While this provided a starting point for change, greater investment is needed by institutions for comprehensive preventative structures to be put in place." (<https://1752group.com/about-us/>)

Towards the 'care-full' university: A national study of staff who are caregivers in the UK Higher Education sector

This research report presents the key findings of the *Towards the 'care-full' university: A national study of staff who are caregivers in the UK Higher Education sector* project. It builds on a smaller, separate project, conducted in our own institution (Moreau and Wheeler, 2022). The key ambitions of the new, scaled-up project presented in this report are to generate an understanding of the experiences of staff who are caregivers at a time of considerable transformation for the HE workforce and to identify a pathway to impact, so as to foster the development of a more inclusive culture for carers across the HE sector. This endeavour also coincides with the development of a range of policies across the sector, aiming to support staff's wellbeing and recognising the new modes of doing paid and care work associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wheeler, Lucie; Moreau, Marie-Pierre; Ubah, Chinenye Ifeoma (2025). Towards the 'care-full' university: A national study of staff who are caregivers in the UK Higher Education sector. Anglia Ruskin Research Online (ARRO). Report.

<https://doi.org/10.25411/aru.29204606.v1>

You can read a blog article on this report [here](#).

Spotlight on accessibility

Beyond buildings: Designing & maintaining classroom lab spaces for physical accessibility

Published in the July edition of the Journal of Engineering Education, the article [Beyond buildings: Designing & maintaining classroom lab spaces for physical accessibility](#) comes from the American context, looking at the physical space. Dr Katherine Deane, PI on one of EDICa's Flexible Fund project, co-Lead of the [EDI+ Hub](#) and long-term advocate and campaigner for accessibility in lab spaces, reviewed the article for us and gave us her thoughts:

"An excellent article. It provides realistic and reasonable suggestions for improving lab access for physically disabled students. However I think it is essential that we address access from a holistic perspective. Physical disabilities frequently co-exist with other impairments, so creative solutions that solve the diverse range of accommodations are needed. As the authors note, it is so much easier to accommodate needs if the accommodations are built in as far as possible. Hearing loops are expensive to retrofit but low cost if installed when building the facility.

"However I do think we need to take a step back and remember that provision of these accommodations is not a charitable act, but an act of enlightened self-interest for anyone wanting high quality research. Diversity of all kinds leads to responsive, relevant, and profitable research. And disability is the ultimate intersectional point of bias, as anyone can be disabled. Everyone will become disabled at some point in their lives; so making working spaces more accessible that ensures your ongoing scientific career despite the vagaries of health and wellbeing is an intelligent option. Unfortunately, current research culture is not just inaccessible but inhumane, often leading to the support for poor behaviours (bullying, overwork, rigidity etc) leading to poor mental and physical wellbeing in our workforce and our researched populations.

"I would encourage people to refocus on compassionate working practices. Compassionate working has been clearly shown in healthcare to result in better quality care, fewer complaints, and a more resilient workforce. The resilience is proposed to be caused because compassion requires you to take action against a painful event, and this leads to your brain's reward centres being activated. Evolution promotes effective community living, which requires compassion. Therefore we should be actively taking steps to shift the whole culture of research so it is more welcoming and accommodating of human variability as a whole in order to make the workforce and its results more resilient to the negative impact of bigotry and bias."

Taylor, Natalie & Robinson, Jason & Rigo, Isaiah & Reck, Rebecca & Bleakney, Adam & Cooper, Rory & Mcdonagh, Deana & Golecki, Holly. (2025). Beyond buildings: Designing and maintaining classroom laboratory spaces for physical accessibility. *Journal of Engineering Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.70009>.



FIGURE 1 Three laboratories on the campus of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Numbers highlight recommendations in

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

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