YML

Young Manufacturing Leaders

Equality, diversity and inclusion

YML

This reference document is designed to provide background information about best practice in terms of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies and how to employ them. It is by no means a complete exploration of the topic but rather an introduction and reference point for inclusive content creation. Links to additional information and resources can be found at the end of this document; however, it is the responsibility of everyone to regularly consult their individual organisation's EDI policy documents, as this is an ever changing and evolving area that requires you to revisit best practices.

What is EDI?

EDI is short for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and it is designed to ensure fair treatment and opportunity for all. It aims to eradicate prejudice and discrimination on the basis of an individual or group of individuals' protected characteristics.
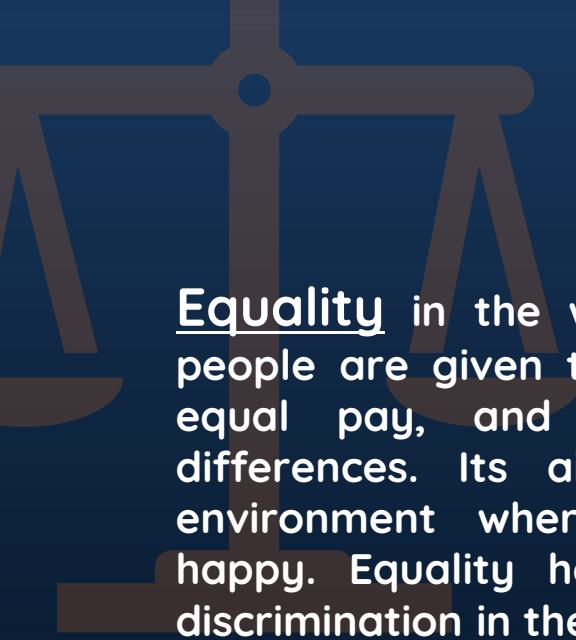
Terms defined:

Equality

Diversity

Inclusion

Equality in the workplace is to make sure that people are given the same opportunities, including equal pay, and are well accepted for their differences. Its aim is to help create a work environment where employees feel secure and happy. Equality helps to ensure the removal of discrimination in the workplace.

Diversity is about recognising difference. It acknowledges the benefits of having a range of perspectives in decision-making as well as recognition of the importance of the workforce being representative of the organisation's customers.

When we hear the word "diversity" we think of race and maybe culture. Of course, when speaking about the diversity of ethnicity, race and culture are key aspects. But diversity is much broader. Diversity cuts across all facets of our lives and it plays an important role in our societal development and progression.

Inclusion is where people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive and succeed at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances.

When completing any task, from something as simple as an email all the way up to a national event, please consider your audience first and work to include people of differing:
Disability, Gender, Civil/Family Status, Sexual Orientation/LGBTQ+, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Religious Beliefs, Race/Ethnic Minority, Rural/Geography, Age.

Why EDI?

Everyone has the right to be treated fairly.

This means that we all should have a right to equal access to employment, training and development based solely on merit. Everyone should have the right to be free of any direct or indirect discrimination and harassment or bullying.

To be successful, organisations need everyone who works for them to make their best contribution and be valued. As well as designing appropriate and fair people practices, it's important to create open and inclusive workplace cultures in which everyone feels valued, respects colleagues, and where their contribution is recognised.

Flexible working and job design are also important components of diversity strategies and part of attracting and retaining a wide pool of talented people. A diverse workforce can help to inform the development of new or enhanced research or products, open new market opportunities and broaden an organisation's reach. However, people need to feel they have a voice in the organisation to allow their different perspectives to be heard.

Communications

We should be all committed to growing an equal, inclusive, diverse workspace and your communications are a critical tool to sustain and advance it.

It is important to present authentic diversity and highlight your priorities around inclusion through all your communications. Doing this may lead to an increased engagement amongst audiences, including those that are internal.

It is important to note that whilst we can commit to new approaches going forward, we also have to review existing content. This is especially true of websites that can have a wide reach and therefore a big impact on our audience.

Amongst the issues to be considered:

- Try not to simply state for example, "showing the rainbow of diversity", i.e. just showing a group picture of the team, but rather also the dynamics in which individuals are presented (e.g. photo of a member of staff of colour leading a group meeting).

- Use of appropriate language and terminology (e.g. describing someone as a "wheelchair user", not as "wheelchair-bound").

- Avoidance of bias, stereotypes, or hurtful clichés.

- Broad representation across editorial content (e.g. news story subjects, featured campus events).

- Use of authentic imagery vs. stock photography.

- Mentions of people, functions, and priorities across your content that relate to diversity, equality, and inclusion.

How do we approach language?

Language is a powerful tool and can play a significant role in informing and influencing the public. Inadvertently, blogs, videos, job descriptions, etc can have subtly coded language that affects how attractive an area of work is to a particular gender, LGBTQ+ people, people with a disability or from a different cultural or ethnic background.

Gender-proofing - Consider the type of language used in your communications: remember to use 'you/your' and 'they/their' rather than 'he/she' or 'him/her'. Research shows that some words have masculine or feminine connotations and may appeal to or put off one gender specifically. Being aware of this can help you ensure content such as job descriptions are more inclusive and may help you attract an underrepresented group. (See Additional Resources section for more.)

"

Masculine associated language	Feminine associated language
Active	Agree
Ambitious	Collaborative
Assertive	Committed
Autonomous	Compassionate
Challenge	Connect
Champion	Considerate
Competitive	Co-operative
Confident	Dependable
Courageous	Empathic
Decisive	Honest
Determined	Interpersonal
Dominant	Interdependent
Driven	Loyal
Fearless	Nurture
Independent	Pleasant
Individual	Polite
Lead	Responsive
Logic	Sensitive
Objective	Support
Persistent	Sympathetic
Principled	Together
Self-confident	Trust
Self-reliant	Understanding
Self-sufficient	Enthusiastic
Superior	Inclusive

A note on unconscious biases

We all like to think we're objective, enlightened decision makers, but thousands of research studies show otherwise. We all have biases - the question is which ones, and what are we going to do about it? We carry unconscious and implicit biases from a lifetime of exposure to cultural attitudes about age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, disability status, and nationality.

The most effective tool available for testing your own unconscious bias is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), created and maintained by Project Implicit, a consortium made up of researchers from Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington. The IAT is a self-assessment of unconscious attitudes and associations created more than 15 years ago and has now been used by millions of people around the world. https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

Another useful resource is UnderstandingPrejudice.org, a website maintained by the Social Psychology Network for students, teachers, and others interested in the causes and consequences of prejudice.

Communication Dos & Don'ts for content

Note that these guidelines apply to all modes of communication, including websites, video, newsletters, social media, reports, press releases, internal communications, promotional materials, advertisements, photography, presentations, opinion pieces, legislative testimony, meetings of all kinds, and speeches.

Monitor the choice of photos and video subjects, in order to reflect EDI.

Think of story angles that implicitly or explicitly reinforce the benefits of EDI, when writing about research and other activities.

Consider the importance of EDI in selecting individuals for quotes and other appearances in the media.

Consider the importance of EDI when planning symposia, focus groups, and other meetings and activities.

Check all materials for language that may be perceived as biased.

Be ready to answer questions on EDI in communications and marketing.

Don't assume that all colleagues have the same definition of respect.

Don't avoid conversations about disrespectful behaviour in the hope that this would somehow prevent this behaviour by itself.

Cultivating a community that is equal, inclusive and diverse isn't easy, but it can start with you. If you engage with EDI policies and work to represent them authentically, you can really make a positive difference. It will not only serve the institution's best interests, but it will reinforce inclusion at a fundamental and societal level.

Personally and practically, what can you do?

- Know the correct words to use to be able to discuss issues of equality and identity.
- Be aware of the harmful impact of stereotypes and assumptions.
- Reflect on your perceptions of different groups.
- Be aware that cultural differences may impact on body language and interactions.
- Make it clear that others can come to you if they are worried about an equality issue.
- Effectively challenge prejudicial attitudes and behaviours – adopt a 'no bystanders' approach.
- Be familiar with the organisation's Equality Diversity and Inclusion policies.

When presenting work, you should:

- Consider the needs of **those** with visual impairments with regards to lighting and size of text.
- Look for stereotypes and assumptions.
- Ensure the needs of those with hearing impairments and disabilities such as autism are considered with regards to noise levels.
- Makes subtitles, captions and audio descriptions available for video presentations.
- Consider the accessibility of text, and avoid acronyms and jargon where possible. Consider using glossaries.
- Explore non-traditional advertising routes to encourage people from varied backgrounds to engage with the topic, such as social media platforms or community noticeboards.

When organising an event, consider:

- Ensure that panels and speakers are representative of EDI.
- Does advertisement of the event demonstrate inclusivity for all attendees?
- Is the venue (building, rooms and toilet facilities) fully accessible for people with physical and sensory impairments and with learning disabilities?
- Is parking and access to the venue fully accessible for attendees with specific needs?
- Can transgender people be accommodated by providing general access to gender neutral toilet facilities?
- Have you considered start time / event breaks in the context of family status, childcare and distance to travel to the event?
- Do you know if people attending this event have particular needs, regarding access /dietary requirements?

- For online events, is the event accessible from a technical perspective? Are subtitles/captions provided for those with auditory challenges?

Your efforts matter

Cultivating a community that is equal, inclusive and diverse isn't easy, but it can start with you. If you engage with EDI policies and work to represent them authentically, you can really make a positive difference. It will not only serve your organisation's best interests, but it will reinforce inclusion at a fundamental and societal level.
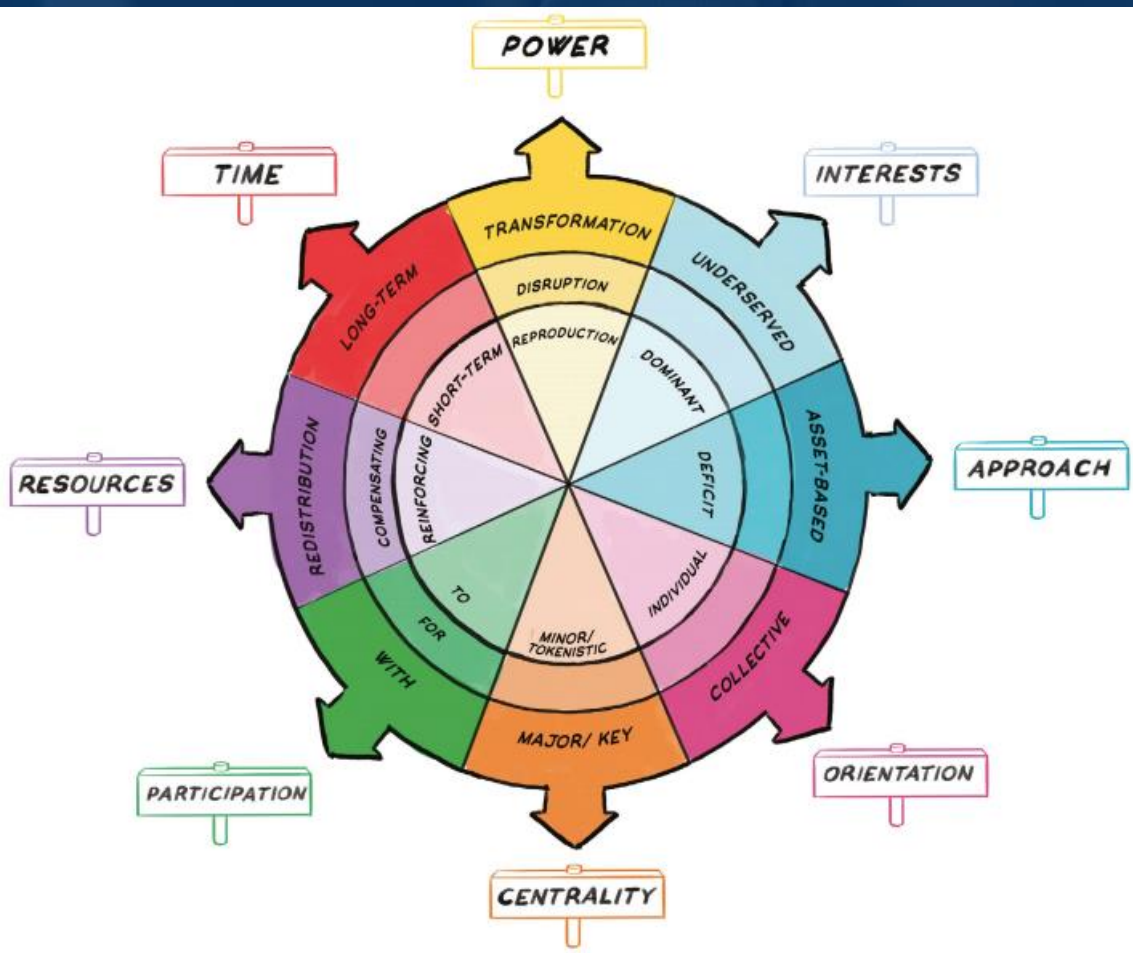
Additional Resources and further reading

- Recruitment Guide – PDF

- Gender Decoder – Link. This tool is a decoder that allows Hiring Managers to gender-proof their Job Descriptions.

- Augmented Writing – Video

- UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Access and Lifelong Learning - a ConnectAbility Guide to Disability – Link.

- UCD has partnered with Ahead to introduce the Willing, Able, Mentored initiative for employing graduates with disabilities. Ahead's Tips for Inclusive Recruitment – Video.

- LGBTI Best Practice Guide for Employers – PDF. This document includes tips on gender-neutral language.

- https://www.ucd.ie/all/ucdstudents/support/disabilitysupport/informationforstaff/guidelinesforaccessibledocuments/

- https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/departments/education-practice-and-society/youth-equity-stem

A final useful tool

The EU funded YESTEM Project for Youth Equality in STEM highlighted a lack of shared understanding of how youth from historically underrepresented backgrounds perceive and experience informal science learning opportunities across national contexts. We face the same challenges to change how manufacturing is seen. The YESTEM team have developed a handy tool for supporting socially just practice called "The Equity Compass", which you may find useful.

The Equity Compass: A tool for supporting socially just practice

- Equitable practice is not just about what you do, but how and why you do it. The stance taken and the principles underlying a particular programme or activity will profoundly shape its potential for either reinforcing, or transforming social inequalities.

- The Equity Compass tool helps users to adopt a social justice mindset when developing and reflecting on their policy and/or practice. It prompts them to consider multiple dimensions of equity, as represented by the eight segments of the compass.

AXIS	GUIDING QUESTIONS
POWER	To what extent are dominant relations (e.g. ideas of scientists as white men; hierarchical relations between educators and students, narrow/elitist representations and forms of science knowledge and practice; differential experiences of ownership and belonging within STEM spaces) being reinforced vs. challenged and changed? Who has agency, power and legitimacy? Are dominant, unjust relations and conditions being reproduced, challenged or meaningfully transformed?
INTERESTS, NEEDS & VALUES	Whose interests, needs and values drive the policy and/or practice? Those of the dominant (e.g. the institution, STEM pipeline, industry, economy) or underserved young people and communities?
APPROACH	How are the interests, knowledge, identities and resources of underserved young people and communities being recognised and valued (an 'assets-based' approach)? Are (some) participants treated in deficit terms (as 'lacking' information, aspiration, interest and somehow being 'out of place')? To what extent are all participants valued and recognised for who they are, rather than who they are not?
ORIENTATION	To what extent does the practice contribute to individual outcomes? To what extent are the outcomes also collective (e.g. for families, wider communities) and/or the wider field? Do the outcomes extend beyond the specific experience or programme?
CENTRALITY	How central, major, intentional and foregrounded are equity issues in the programme and organisation? Are equity issues everyone's core business or are they minor, token, peripheral concerns (e.g. restricted to special programmes, and temporary funding)? How are issues and experiences of injustice recognised and challenged?
PARTICIPATION	Is the practice being done 'to', 'for' or 'with' underserved young people and communities? Who has ownership and voice in decision making? How participatory is the practice? Are young people producers or just consumers of science? Is the practice exploitative/ tokenistic? Are young people valued partners? How is youth identity and agency being supported?
RESOURCES	Are resources and efforts mostly directed at more privileged people and those who already feel 'science-y'? How are the STEM knowledge, skills, social networks, and chances of underserved people being supported? Is the approach/experience reinforcing dominant relations and conditions, taking a compensatory approach or is it more meaningfully redistributing resources and changing ideas about what resources are valued?
TIME	Is the practice one-off, short-term or longer-term? Is attention being paid to supporting young people's trajectories and progression over time and across contexts? How are youth pathways being brokered and supported both within the experience and beyond the moment/ programme/ setting?

YML

Young Manufacturing Leaders

info@youngmanufacturingleaders.org