



# Equity and Inclusivity in Research Funding



## All Islands Culture Conference



Dr Thandiwe Hara – 16th May 2024

# Introduction

1. In 2023, Oxford Published the [Equity in RF Sector Report](#)
2. Select findings and recommendations
3. The Oxford approach to implementation
4. Sector wide work
5. How you can get involved
6. Questions





# Select findings and recommendations



Funders

Institutions



# Approach to implementation

## The University of Oxford action plan

- We consulted and engaged extensively
- Plan was approved by RIC in Nov 2023

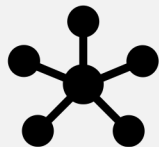


## The Plan has Five objectives:

1. Assemble a Working Group to deliver the plan
2. Understand diversity data better
3. Develop toolkits to support implementation
4. Leadership
5. Deliver Sector wide work

## Committees

1. Social Sciences – Res Stra grp
2. Social Sciences - EDI Panel
3. Social Sciences - PRC
4. MPLS - Board
5. MSD – Fin General Purposes Com
6. Hums Div Board – Res Com
7. HR - Directorate
8. The Unions (UCU, Unite, Unison)
9. GLAM Research Committee
10. EDI Unit
11. EDI Networks – BME, LGBTQ
12. Heads of Divisional Research Off
13. Research Services – Funding Team



# Approach to sector-wide work

## Universities (Focus groups)

1. University of Birmingham
2. University of Cambridge
3. Imperial College London
4. University of Sheffield
5. University of Warwick
6. University of Glasgow
7. University of Exeter
8. Leeds University
9. Queen's University of Belfast
10. University of Brighton
11. Manchester Metropolitan University
12. University of the West of England
13. Newcastle University
14. Queen Mary University
15. University of Edinburgh
16. King's College London
17. Nottingham University
18. Swansea University
19. Nottingham Trent University
20. Cardiff University
21. University of Chester
22. Durham University
23. University of East Anglia
24. Anglia Ruskin University
25. De Montfort University
26. University of Coventry
27. London School of Economics

## Funders (Interviews)

1. The Royal Society
2. Cancer Research UK
3. Wellcome
4. The British Academy
5. The Leverhulme Trust
6. UKRI
7. MRC
8. ESRC
9. HEFCW
10. SFC
11. Research England



# Approach to sector-wide work

- Engaged the sector to identify sector-level actions
- Originally envisaged a set of commitments that universities could commit to
- Planned to develop a Forum of partners (universities and funders)

Following engagement we revised the approach to focus on:

1. The areas that require collective effort to make a difference, as opposed to individual commitments that can be delivered at organisational level
2. The need for a structure and mechanism through which collective action could be taken. i.e. the Forum.
3. Taking stock of the actions that institutions and funders are already undertaking – this provided insight into good practice and sector-wide gaps. i.e. identification of the priority areas of work.

A skeleton of the outputs of this process was taken to the sector-wide event in Feb 2024.



# The Forum – 24 February 2024

Aims of the day:

- To refine the outputs from the engagement process above i.e.
- Agree sector priorities
- Decide how the priorities could be delivered – developing a Forum
- A way forward through commitment to collaborative action



# Practice-sharing

At the Forum we also heard from:



**Diego Baptista**

**Wellcome**

Head of Research and  
Funding Equity



**Ken Emond**

Head of Research Funding

**Henry Brefo**

EDI Manager

**Nick Lambriano**

Head of Fellowship  
Engagement & Governments

**British Academy**



**Candy Rowe**

**Newcastle University**

Dean for Research Culture &  
Strategy



**Doris Ruth Eikhof**

**University of Glasgow**

Professor of Cultural Economy  
& Policy, School of Culture &  
Creative Arts;  
Academic Lead for Inclusive  
Research Practice





# Outputs from the Forum

## 1 Public statement

Committing to uphold the **three principles** and to focus our efforts on **the priority areas**

## 3 Principles

- We will tackle issues at the **interface of research organisations and funders**, and those that have the potential to effect sector-wide change
- We will observe **equity in the process**, ensuring that all organisations are able to contribute to and benefit from the Forum regardless of their status
- We will **openly share the outputs** of our collective efforts for the benefit of the wider sector

## 8 Priority areas

1. Map of **available support from UK funders to support minoritised groups**, to understand different approaches across sector.
2. Sector guidance on mechanism for introducing **positive action**.
3. **Data-gathering specifications and protocols** and move the sector towards a more consistent data-sharing framework.
4. Guidance on improving **opportunities for minoritised groups to grow access to networks, mentoring, and sponsorship**.
5. **Guidelines on implementing effective standardised approach to demand management of funding calls** to ensure ED&I is considered in both the design and execution of the funding calls.
6. **Map of the funding process** to identify the intersection points of funders and institutions, that could benefit from a coordinated action to effectively support minority groups in a way that avoids duplication of efforts and creation of additional administrative burdens on both sides.
7. **Mechanisms to mitigate the negative effect of quick turnaround and short-term funding calls**, such as more use of pre-announcements and wider information sharing on upcoming calls.
8. Consistent and inclusive application processes and requirements for research funding schemes that follow **universal design principles**.



# What next?



## Equity and Inclusivity in Research Funding Forum: Research Funder and University Joint Statement

**A shared action plan for a more equitable, diverse and inclusive research funding ecosystem**

(April 2024 - Final Draft)

We, the members of this Forum, acknowledge the well-documented [systemic barriers and challenges](#) that individuals in marginalised groups face to secure research funding. We agree that bringing a wider range of people into the research community supports the robustness of research.

We also recognise that effective change can be accelerated through collective sector-wide coordinated action that will complement what individual organisations are already doing.

### Principles: Our focus

The focus of the Forum is on equity and inclusivity in *research funding* specifically, and by signing up to this statement we agree to work together according to the following principles. These principles will also guide us in selecting what we will do as a Forum.

## Currently (May 2024):

- We have now refined all documents post-forum: i) principles, 2) priority areas, 3) terms of reference
- Engaging further with HEIs/Funders
- Securing sign-ups to joint statement and terms of reference
- Write sector blog / update webpage
- Convening the internal working group
- Inviting others to join us in this journey to transform the funding ecosystem



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# Questions ?

Contact: [thandiwe.hara-msulira@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:thandiwe.hara-msulira@admin.ox.ac.uk)