

Advance HE EDI Conference 2025

The sum of many parts: Embedding intersectionality in HE practice

Poster abstracts

Day 1 – 2 April 2025

Poster reference: D1P1

The power of storytelling in community building

Elaine Watt, University of Leeds

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

The poster shares how the collaborative tool of storytelling has been used in the formation of the University of Leeds EDI Community of Practice, launched this year. Drawing on Ubuntu and Gottschall's theories, storytelling is the connective web that has united domain, practice, and community as well as individual members within that group. The connections made empower sharing of best practice and a collaborative, intersectional approach to challenge inequities experienced by staff. The interactive poster allows a self-directed exploration of storytelling to experience its power and thus, provides a platform for application in diverse EDI-centred groups.

Poster reference: D1P3

Experiences of higher education staff with disabilities in the UK; the impact of intersectional identities and personal perceptions of disability

Alexa Elias, SHARE Collaborative, Queen Mary University of London

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

This review synthesised qualitative evidence to investigate experiences of staff with disabilities in UK higher education (UKHE). We conducted a database search and hand search to identify academic and grey literature describing experiences of staff with disabilities in UKHE. We identified 31 studies and narrative accounts. We analysed findings using thematic synthesis and identified six themes providing insights into: intersectionality, experiences with reasonable adjustments and support, 'disclosing' disability, experiences of ableism and inaccessibility, impacts of ableism and inaccessibility, and experiences during COVID-19. Findings suggest current systems of support for staff with disabilities in UKHE are inadequate and warrant considerable improvement.

Poster reference: D1P4

Mainstreaming EDI: Lessons from Scotland

Ellie DeLappe and Sebastian Bromelow, University of Edinburgh

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Come and explore the Scottish duty of 'Mainstreaming' with the University of Edinburgh's HR EDI Team. We'll be presenting the duty and then unpacking the challenges and benefits of our mainstreaming approach to EDI and the impact that has had on our staff and student communities. Devolution of EDI across our 15,000 staff and 50,000 students means we have to work together, fostering allyship, dialogue and an embedding of intersectionality to our work. We hope that you will find it thought-provoking, and we look forward to unpacking this Scottish approach with attendees from the rest of the UK, and beyond.

Poster reference: D1P5

Proceed with caution: The importance of considering the intersection between gender, career stage and discipline

Agata Czech and Becky Ioppolo, University of Cambridge

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

We examine disparities in grant funding looking at who applies, how much they apply for, who is successful, and how much they are awarded. We reveal a complex relationship between the intersecting characteristics of gender, career stage, and discipline. Using administrative data from the University of Cambridge, we analyse over 20,000 grant applications covering over 3,500 researchers using a Bayesian statistical approach, which allows us to present our results alongside uncertainty estimates.

Poster reference: D1P6

Survivance and refusal: Black male academic trailblazers in UK higher education

Dr Josephine Gabi and Diane Warner, Manchester Metropolitan University and Dr Charmaine Brown and Denise Miller, University of Greenwich and Dr Susan Davis, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Participants will leave with an enhanced understanding of the "survivance" Black male academics experience and actionable insights for addressing representation and supporting diverse career trajectories in academia, with an emphasis on inclusive practices in policy, employment procedures, retention, and advancement.

Poster reference: D1P7

Exploring the accessibility of PWP teaching for deaf students: A reflection of the experiences of students and facilitators

Eleanor Vials, University of Reading

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Inclusive education should enable all students to access course content, fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge at assessment (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014). The Equality Act (2010) stipulates that the education sector make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to teaching and learning. Research has found that Deaf students face challenges around social and educational inclusion (Batista & Garcia, 2023). This small-scale project explores the experience of a clinical training programme for Deaf students and colleagues. It outlines the adjustments made and reflects on key learning that will inform higher education.

Poster reference: D1P8

Racially minoritised academics (RMAs) hierarchy of needs in UK universities

Dr Charmaine Brown and Denise Miller, University of Greenwich and Dr Josephine Gabi, Manchester Metropolitan University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

The study contributes to new knowledge to the field of motivational theory. This qualitative study applies thematic analysis to address Racially Minoritised Academic's (RMA's), Hierarchy of Needs, proposing a revised analytical framework to Maslow (1943) and Blackfoot (Siksika) Nation's community model of Needs (Ravilochan, 2021). In alignment with Foucault (1984) and Read's (2023) concepts of heterotopia, the study analyses the social precarity of Higher Education as a complex, cultural counter-space which thrives on unequal practices in the motivation and promotion of RMA's.

Poster reference: D1P9

Racial bias in healthcare and healthcare education: A systematic review of clinical outcomes and educational influences

Vittoria Sorice, University of Derby / Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Dr Gerri Mortimore

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Racial bias in healthcare and education perpetuates health inequities, affecting service quality and accessibility for minorities. This systematic review, spanning 45 studies from 2014-2024, identified a self-perpetuating cycle of racial bias, encompassing healthcare access, perceived discrimination, provider bias, educational disparities, and literature inequities. Findings reveal significant disparities across medical specialities and highlight the underrepresentation of minorities in medical education. Comprehensive interventions, including implicit bias training and improved representation, are crucial to disrupt this cycle and promote health equity.

Poster reference: D1P10

A positive view on inclusion of data in selection and support for candidates to doctoral study

Dr Richy Hetherington and Hania Fiaz, Newcastle University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

There has been a trend toward the redaction of information from applications to support a fairer approach, and to encourage entry to doctoral study from a broader range of applicants. The data considered suggests that some demographic groupings may continue to be marginalised by this process. This research considers the intersectional influence of socio-economic status and ethnically marginalised groups. We argue that to most effectively promote and support engagement into doctoral study that all information should be considered and contextualised. Addressing unconscious or conscious bias requires the assessors of applications to consider trajectory and growth not only current suitability.

Poster reference: D1P11

Identity and intersectionality: Understanding students' experiences in higher education setting

Radhika Radhika, Heriot-watt University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

The PhD research intends to explore how identity and intersectionality shape the experiences of students from the global south in higher education by taking academic, social and mental wellbeing into account. The research aims to explore how social and psychological factors influence the students' concept of relational identity and intersectionality. This participant-led research runs with a broader aim to co-create research questions and methodologies with the student participants which at last intends to address the challenges and achievements of higher education practices to achieve diversity and inclusion.

Poster reference: D1P12

Balancing time equity and academic integrity: The paradox of deadline extensions in higher education

Dr Jackie Cameron, Dr Mavis Gutu and Simone Kurtzke, Edinburgh Napier University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Higher education policies around deadline extensions seek to promote inclusivity yet may inadvertently create inequalities among student groups. This session examines this paradox through case study data, revealing which groups may benefit most from extension policies and where inequities may persist. Attendees will engage in the interactive Policy Design Lab, collectively exploring ways to enhance inclusivity in deadline extension policies. The session will also address data challenges, exploring whether more comprehensive demographic data can support equitable assessment policies. Participants will gain insights they can apply in their institutional settings.

Poster reference: D1P14

Enhancing quality assurance through diversity, equity, and inclusion: Insights from student support services and belonging surveys at Pakistan's first women's university

Dr Bushra Yasmin, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

The paper offers firsthand insights into student support services and students' sense of belonging, addressing diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) in higher education. Specifically, it examines student engagement and its impact on creating positive learning experience, nurturing soft skills, and influencing the institution's quality assurance policies to better meet student needs. The study explores students' involvement in decision-making processes and establishment of a robust alumni network. The findings show a varied but generally moderate to high sense of belonging among students across different parameters. Students perceive their campus as diverse and safe, reflecting a conducive learning environment concerning EDI indicators.

Poster reference: D1P17

Navigating religious diversity in higher education: Challenges and strategies

Dr Yosepha Tabib Calif, Rothschild Partnerships and Professor Dame Orna Sasson Levy, Bar-Illan University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

How do academic institutions respond to the rise of religious identities and practices on campus? How do diversity units and EDI leaders tackle the new challenges and demands posed by religious students? In our conference presentation, we will explore three practices that challenge traditional academic norms: gender segregation requested by Ultra-Orthodox Jewish students, the wearing of the niqab by religious Muslim students, and demands for prayer spaces from religious students of various minority groups. We will present different strategies used by institutions based on their unique characteristics and collaborate with attendees to develop new strategies together.

Day 2 – 3 April 2025

Poster reference: D2P2

Strategic leadership of EDI: The student perspective on belonging, engagement and self-confidence

Dr Amy Bywater and Libby Watson, University of Wolverhampton

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

This session provides an overview of the strategic leadership of EDI over a 4-year period through the approach of theories of change. This approach could be a model adopted by academic staff or leads of EDI in other institutions. The heart of this session lies with the themes generated after exploring the student perspective on belonging, engagement and self-confidence (BESC). The intention was to plan and act based on diverse student-voice, to understand the complexity of our students lives, and to co-create a BESC charter to inform teaching and learning, curriculum, and wrap around pastoral practices with students.

Poster reference: D2P3

Expanding horizons: The impact of the career development group on ethnic-minority students' academic career aspirations

Salma Mehboob and Dr Yael Benn, Manchester Metropolitan University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Launched in September 2023, the Career Development Group (CDG) was set up to address underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in academia was by co-exploring and addressing the barriers with high-performing ethnic-minority students. Through mentoring, skill-building workshops, and peer support, CDG empowers 2nd-year students with essential technical and personal skills, from academic writing to confidence-building. Now in its second year,

CDG has successfully inspired participants to consider academic careers as a viable path—an option they did not previously consider. This session will present qualitative insights from CDG's students and set a model for reducing representation and awarding gaps in academia.

Poster reference: D2P4

Breaking barriers in STEM publishing: Advancing equity through open and transparent peer review

Dr Vittorio Cecconi, Loughborough University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

To foster true inclusivity, it's essential that science remains accessible to all, free from financial barriers that inhibit participation, especially for early-career researchers. The existence of high-profile journals like Nature and Science, while impactful, poses challenges for those unable to afford publication fees. Advocating for entirely free, transparently peer-reviewed journals could significantly level the playing field, allowing talent from various backgrounds to contribute equally to scientific advancement and ensuring that ideas are valued over financial means.

Poster reference: D2P5

Building equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the physiology curriculum through co-creation with undergraduate students

Dr Mary McGahon, Queen's University of Belfast

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Through shared perspectives, we have taken important first steps toward decolonizing the Physiology curriculum, revealing also the huge magnitude of the task. Building upon our examples of how we are implementing change we hope to inspire others to take simple steps to embed principles of EDI and create a learning environment that values diversity and reflects each student. We would highly recommend that every teaching department simply ask their students what topics they want to investigate to increase representation and recognition within the curriculum whilst providing space for them to explore their own and each other's diverse life experiences.

Poster reference: D2P6

Co-creating a growth mindset with female creatives in technical environments, through community learning and interactive classroom approaches,

Jayne Sayer, University of Salford

Building on a framework of a University of Salford immersive cinema technologies research project, this education focused project aims to build confidence and technological engagement in aspiring female professionals through creative experiences within cutting-edge industrial contexts. Applying approaches such as identity and noticing (Hod, Dvir, Tug, 2023) and adding to the pedagogy surrounding fixed and growth mindsets (Dweck, 2008; Nottingham & Larsson, 2019) this project applies co-creative and practice-as-research methodologies to address the under-representation of female creatives in technical careers and educational pathways.

Poster reference: D2P7

The beyond ethnicity career conference (BECC) at Imperial College London

Alex Dawes, Imperial College London

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

The Beyond Ethnicity Career Conference (BECC) has run annually for 5 years at Imperial College London and grown from an event focussing on practical skills to being a flagship event tackling topical and important themes, such as entrepreneurship, AI, the impact of lifelong learning and presenting your best self. Come and see how we grew our target audience, initially staff from Minority Ethnic backgrounds to delegates from other

underrepresented groups and how everyone benefitted from the enhance discussions and networking. The day brings people from diverse backgrounds together to feel a shared sense of community and inspiration for the future.

Poster reference: D2P9

Placement debrief conversations: A method of support for students who experience racism on placement in the NHS

Katherine Waterfall, University of East Anglia

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Global majority students looking to join the NHS face significant barriers within their training, including racism. This presentation will detail a new pilot programme of 'debrief conversations' implemented for 2024-25 within the School of Health Sciences at the University of East Anglia (UEA). We will discuss the planning and development of the project and highlight the voices of current Global Majority students facing racism on clinical placements in the NHS. Initial experiences of staff involvement in the programme will be discussed, including barriers, facilitators and limitations.

Poster reference: D2P10

What impacts the clinical education experiences of neurodivergent healthcare students?

Sarah Clements, University of Surrey

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Healthcare and medical students undertake practice placements as a significant part of their programme. Student experiences are influenced greatly by self identity, organisational culture and relational dynamics. For students who identify as neurodivergent, this can be especially challenging as they negotiate inflexible and frequently changing clinical environments in which they are assessed against standards that decide their competency for their chosen career. A systematic review of contemporary qualitative evidence discusses barriers and facilitators to the experiences of neurodivergent healthcare students and proposes a theoretical framework to better understand these, paving the way for better support.

Poster reference: D2P11

Neurodivergent equality, diversity and inclusion - It's not just students

Emily Adams, Professional Association of SpLD Specialists in Higher Education (PASSHE) & University of Hull and Kate Connary, Professional Association of SpLD Specialists in Higher Education (PASSHE).

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Neurodivergence and the pressure to fit in can take a heavy toll on neurodivergent people. Masking parts of oneself to better fit is common in the workplace and can have considerable negative effects on mental health (Pryke-Hobbs et al 2023). Consequently, having a safe and supportive space where staff can unmask and be themselves can make a real difference. We will consider the power of shared experience; and how Staff sharing personal experiences in a safe space develops connections, confidence, self-awareness and self-advocacy, and how this positively impacts the student experience (University of Hull's Neurodivergent Staff Network).

Poster reference: D2P15

What does EDI mean for postgraduate research provisions? Intersectional insights from a relevant review at Middlesex University

Dr Panagiota Sotiropoulou, Advance HE

This presentation explores the complexity of EDI policy and practice in the context of

postgraduate research (PGR) studies at Middlesex University, an institution with a highly diverse student and staff population. It is based on a bespoke EDI review of PGR students that the university co-delivered with Advance HE. The review process was characterised by co-creation and an intersectional approach, involving various data collection methods, postgraduate researchers as well as PGR-facing staff. Outlining the main findings of the review as well as recommendations, this presentation will provide useful insights to anyone interested in shaping inclusive PGR cultures.

Poster reference: D2P16

Stepping off the paved footpath: How under-represented trainees approach non-linear training models in surgery

Sarah Aitken, University of Sydney

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Key findings from a qualitative interview study examining how trainees self-identifying as under-represented in surgery approach non-linear training models will be presented. Using Self-Determination Theory (SDT), we explore how surgical trainees develop autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Just as desire paths emerge where people walk off paved footpaths, our research shows that trainees from under-represented identities forge their own paths, embracing or resisting structured training models on their career trajectories. Participants will gain an appreciation for how training programs can cater to for diverse learning models to support trainees in navigating their learning.

Poster reference: D2P17

Inclusive assessment practices: Enhancing engagement and learning outcomes through peer feedback and digital tools

Darshi Thilanka Bandara, University of Keele

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Inclusive feedback is essential to fostering engagement and academic growth for diverse students. This session examines the impact of exemplar-based peer feedback and social annotation tools on learning outcomes, focusing on enhancing feedback literacy among foundation-year students. Drawing from a mixed-methods case study in human biology, this session offers practical insights for educators seeking to implement inclusive assessment practices that promote self-regulation, critical thinking, and active learning.

Poster reference: D2P22

Building bridges, healing wounds: Promoting intercultural dialogue on Israeli campuses in the wake of the iron swords war

Maayan Blumenfeld, Kibbutzim College of Education

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Building Bridges, Healing Wounds: Promoting Intercultural Dialogue on Israeli Campuses in the Wake of the Iron Swords War M. Blumenfeld, M. Levi-Keren, K. Rozenberg and R. Arviv Elyashiv Kibbutzim College, located in Tel Aviv, Israel, has faced complex challenges in fostering a shared communal life within Israeli society, particularly in academic institutions, in the wake of the October 7th events and the Iron Swords War. Unique challenges have emerged in the relationships between Jewish and Arab students. This presentation will showcase a study that examined how Jewish and Arab students perceive their campus experience.

Poster reference: D2P25

Equality, diversity and inclusion into research and innovation (EDIT): Guidance for best practice

Professor Joanna Semlyen and Dr Leanne Tyson, University of East Anglia

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

EDIT (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into Research and Innovation) guidance provides suggested best practice for implementing EDI considerations in research and research culture. A mixed-methods approach was taken to establish best practice, discover barriers and develop facilitators to EDI implementation in HE research and innovation. The EDIT Guidance is a framework facilitating reflection on current practices, identification of training and development needs, and identifying steps towards greater inclusion. The guidance can be used to implement and operationalise EDI within research and research culture and REF PCE, and provide a clear pathway to improve considerations of EDI that benefit all.

Poster reference: D2P25

Neuroinclusive universities for staff

Dr Emma Harrison, Dr Gwennan Barton, Yasmin Washbrook, Jess Achileos and Fiona Falkingham, Wrexham University

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

Our Neurodiverse Research Group was formed to investigate support for neurodivergent staff in UK higher education. Using a small grant, we hosted a Research Roundtable Event Day, blending networking with data collection. A world café-style setup was used, featuring four tables with questions on current support, defining a neuroinclusive university, achieving inclusivity, and barriers. Neurotypical and neurodivergent staff from various institutions participated, sharing insights across academic and professional services departments. Responses were recorded on flipchart paper and later analysed using Qualitative Description.

Poster reference: D2P26

From day one: Shaping student conduct for a positive university journey

Puja Laporte, University of Warwick

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

From Day One: Shaping Student Conduct for a Positive University Journey: This poster explores the development and impact of the mandatory Moodle module "Student Conduct – What You Need to Know", provided to all students at the University of Warwick. The module helps students navigate conduct expectations and responsibilities before arriving on campus, fostering an inclusive and respectful community. It introduces strategies like the Active Bystander method and guidance on consent and boundaries, emphasising prevention and community support. High levels of engagement and positive student feedback underscore its effectiveness, providing insights for implementing similar pre-arrival learning at other institutions.

Poster reference: D2P27

Equality, diversity and inclusion into research and innovation (EDIT): Guidance for best practice

Professor Joanna Semlyen, Dr Leanne Tyson, Dr Zoe Vail and Dr Poopak Azhand, University of East Anglia

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

EDIT (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into Research and Innovation) guidance provides suggested best practice for implementing EDI considerations in research and research culture. A mixed-methods approach was taken to establish best practice, discover barriers and develop facilitators to EDI implementation in HE researches and innovation. The EDIT Guidance is a framework facilitating reflection on current practices, identification of training and development needs, and identifying steps towards greater inclusion. The guidance can be used to implement and operationalise EDI within research and research culture and REF PCE and provide a clear pathway to improve considerations of EDI that benefit all.

Poster reference: D2P28

Enhancing support and the visibility of role models for neurodivergent students

Dr Natalie Mack, University of Nottingham

Poster presentation, Stephenson Suite Foyer

In the School of Biosciences at the University of Nottingham, we have taken numerous approaches to both explore neurodivergent student experiences and enhance the visibility of neurodivergent staff role models. Our approaches have included panel events, focus group research, and a staff experience poster campaign. We have hosted 3 panel events to openly discuss neurodiversity and lived experiences, exploring associated challenges, coping strategies, and strengths. The poster campaign also focused on the same aspects of staff experiences but in an anonymous fashion, thereby facilitating staff who may not be open about their neurodivergence to share. We have conducted 8 focus groups with a total of 23 students who identify as being neurodivergent. Thematic analysis of the discussions in those groups has highlighted various issues that we are now developing actions to address to enhance the inclusivity and accessibility of our teaching and assessment practices. Here, we summarise the findings from the focus groups and demonstrate the positive impact of our multiple approaches on students. Key actions from this work include improving exam feedback processes, accessibility of laboratory learning environments, and communication of support plans. We will share our future plans, including external collaborations, and invite connection and additional collaboration with colleagues across the university interested in this area.