ENclusion Conference

“Connecting EDI Research and Action At and By ENU”

23 May 2025

Craiglockhart Campus, 219 Colinton Road Edinburgh EH14 1DJ

Contents

[About ENclusion 1](#_Toc195620849)

[Vision 1](#_Toc195620850)

[Conference Overview 1](#_Toc195620851)

[Conference Organising Committee 2](#_Toc195620852)

[Conference Program 3](#_Toc195620853)

[Overview 3](#_Toc195620854)

[Morning Sessions 4](#_Toc195620855)

[Afternoon & Evening Sessions 5](#_Toc195620856)

[Guest Services & Accessibility 5](#_Toc195620857)

[Keynote 6](#_Toc195620858)

[Speaker Bio and Abstract 6](#_Toc195620859)

[Panel Topic: Social Mobility: Is Higher Education Engine of Opportunity or Gatekeeper? 7](#_Toc195620860)

[Panellist Bios 7](#_Toc195620861)

[Parallel Sessions 9](#_Toc195620862)

[The Student Experience: Belonging, Mattering, and Becoming 9](#_Toc195620863)

[Examining Institutional Support for HE Students with ADHD: An Exploratory Study 9](#_Toc195620864)

[Journeys to Belonging and Mattering at ENU - Capturing Diverse Voices to Enhance the Student Experience 10](#_Toc195620865)

[Impact of UK Immigration Policy Changes on International Master's Students 11](#_Toc195620866)

[Students feeling they matter 14](#_Toc195620867)

[Gendered Realities: Abuse, Arts, and Online Wellbeing 15](#_Toc195620868)

[Social Media Literacy & Wellbeing Project: Educating and Empowering Teenage Girls 15](#_Toc195620869)

[Employers' Understanding and Support for Female Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse 16](#_Toc195620870)

[Gender Inequalities in the Edinburgh Arts Festival Sector 17](#_Toc195620871)

[AI for EDI: Widening Access, HRM and Individualised Assessments 18](#_Toc195620872)

[Developing Inclusive AI-Driven Robotics Learning Materials for BAME Communities 18](#_Toc195620873)

[How can the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) enhance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and its sustainability within organisations?: Challenges and Opportunities (A Pilot Study) 19](#_Toc195620874)

[Mitigating Risks of AI Misuse in Education: Individualised Assessments 20](#_Toc195620875)

[Diverse Expressions of EDI: Film, Music, Language and Cultural 21](#_Toc195620876)

[Signs & Gestures: as short film with dialogues in BSL 21](#_Toc195620877)

[CIMSRS: Community Instrumental Music Service for Rural Scotland 22](#_Toc195620878)

[I Said Something: Small Acts, Big Impact in Addressing Systemic Inequality 23](#_Toc195620879)

[EDI in Collaborative Online Independent Learning (COIL) Projects 24](#_Toc195620880)

[Linguistic Imperialism and Socioeconomic Inequality: An EDI Perspective on English in the Philippines' Linguistic Landscape 25](#_Toc195620881)

[Skills, Employability, and Flexible Working 26](#_Toc195620882)

[Training for work-based learning workplace mentors, especially to ensure inclusion 26](#_Toc195620883)

[Widya Indonesia: Empowering Indonesian Women in STEM 27](#_Toc195620884)

[Establishing the SDG5 Living Lab for Gender Equality in Entrepreneurship 28](#_Toc195620885)

[Breaking Barriers: Embedding EDI in Green Skills Development for a Net-Zero Built Environment 29](#_Toc195620886)

[EDI in Higher Education: Neurodivergence, Synaesthesia and ADHD 30](#_Toc195620887)

[Breaking Barriers: Collaboration between Enable Scotland and Edinburgh Napier University for Neuro-Divergent School Leavers 30](#_Toc195620888)

[Embracing Synaesthesia in Research: A Personal Journey 31](#_Toc195620889)

[Impact of Working from Home on Autistic Employees' Motivation 32](#_Toc195620890)

[Feature Film 33](#_Toc195620891)

[Feature Film Sci-Fi: Itu Ninu 33](#_Toc195620892)

[Workshops 34](#_Toc195620893)

[Workshop 1: Beyond Celebratory Days, Flying Flags & Box-Ticking: A Framework for Fostering an EDIB Culture in Higher Education 34](#_Toc195620894)

[Workshop 2: Integrating Diverse Stakeholder Views in University Projects and Policies 35](#_Toc195620895)

[Workshop 3: Igniting Your Impact: Entrepreneurial Thinking for a Better World 36](#_Toc195620896)

[Workshop 4: Flexible Working Scotland: Connecting forward thinking employers with flexible talent so both can thrive 37](#_Toc195620897)

[Workshop 5: Backlash-Proofing EDI: Embedding Policies and Practices Amidst the Culture War 38](#_Toc195620898)

[Workshop 6: Addressing Gender Imbalance in the Scottish STEM Sector 39](#_Toc195620899)

[Workshop 7: Meet the Editor: Publishing EDI Research 40](#_Toc195620900)

[Workshop 8: Access Denied: The cost of inaccessible conferences and how to design for everyone 41](#_Toc195620901)

[Workshop 9: Equity Implications of Assessment Deadline Extension Policies in Higher Education 42](#_Toc195620902)

[Posters 43](#_Toc195620903)

[Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making in the UK Construction Industry 43](#_Toc195620904)

[Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Gait Speed and Physical Function Assessments 44](#_Toc195620905)

[Co-Creation of a Continuing Professional Development Toolkit focused on self-management of respiratory health issues in people with learning disabilities 45](#_Toc195620906)

# About ENclusion

## Vision

The Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) ENclusion conference aims to connect and advance EDI research and action at ENU from all disciplines, students, staff, alumni, and our communities of ENU research users. While showcasing and advancing research is a primary goal, we are equally dedicated to highlighting EDI in action (impacts and interventions) from all ENU staff, students, and alumni.

## Conference Overview

ENclusion is a one-day event featuring a keynote address, research and EDI-in-action case presentations, professional development workshops, a panel discussion, and EDI-themed performance, with presentations live-streamed on Teams where possible. The conference will begin with networking opportunities and an opening keynote, followed by morning parallel sessions. After lunch, afternoon parallel sessions will continue with a similar format. Varied presentation formats including film, workshops, lightening talks and posters, alongside standard presentations will facilitate discussion.

ENclusion addresses diverse topics: policy and practice for systemic change, including tackling gender equity in STEM, combating the backlash against EDI initiatives and embedding inclusive cultures. Film screenings showcase diverse perspectives. Neurodiversity, Synaesthesia, accessibility and the international student experience are explored. In the workplace, AI for sustainable EDI, mentorship and entrepreneurial thinking are considered. Research presentations consider linguistic imperialism, domestic abuse, and equitable assessment, AI’s impact on learning and work.

The keynote and panel will provide thought provoking presentations on Social mobility, the panel covering the topic: “"Social Mobility: Is Higher Education the Engine of Opportunity or Gatekeeper?" The panel discussion will explore key questions like:

* Are universities doing enough to promote social mobility? Is ENU?
* Should universities prioritise access for disadvantaged students?
* How can universities balance academic rigour with support for diverse students?

**Katrina Swanton**, [graphic illustrator](https://www.swantonsketches.co.uk/) and ENU's head of quality, will create visuals capturing key takeaways from conference sessions. These visuals will serve as lasting reminders of the event and inspire continued engagement with EDI themes, contributing to ongoing dialogue and action.

The day will conclude with EDI-themed performances, appreciation and a glimpse into the future at 7 pm.

## Conference Organising Committee

**Evans Eghan**, President (Societies & Community), Edinburgh Napier Students' Association

**Jackie Brodie**, Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, The Business School, ENU

**Justine Ehimen**, Project Manager and Team Lead, Passion for Fusion and ENU Alumnus

**Mania Moysidou**, Postgraduate Dissertation Program Lead, The Business School, ENU

**Max Chipulu**, Associate Dean for Reseach and Innovation, The Business School, ENU (Conference Lead)

**Paolo Gerli**, School Academic Lead for Enterprise and Innovation, The Business School, ENU

**Patrick Harte**, Head Taught Postgraduate Studies, The Business School, ENU

**Sarah Borthwick Saddler**, Business School Academic Lead for Student Success , The Business School, ENU

**Serena Watson**, School Support Service, The Business School, ENU (Conference Adminstrator)

**Sharan Virdee**, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, ENU

**Tereza Emond Kunert**, School Academic Lead for Equality, Diverisity and Inclusion, The Business School, ENU

**Wendy Wu**, Lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Business Adviser, ENU

# Conference Program

## Overview

## Morning Sessions

**9:00 - 9:30 AM:** **Networking & Coffee**, The Foyer, Craiglockhart Campus

**9:30 - 9:45 AM: Welcome & Introductory Remarks**

Prof Nazira Karodia, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching

Location: The Riady Theatre

**9:45 - 10:45 AM: Keynote: Demystifying Social Mobility:**

Archana Rao Dannamaneni, MBE, Tax Manager & Yorkshire Social Mobility Lead, HM Revenue and Customs

Location: The Riady Theatre

**10:45 - 11:00 AM: Comfort & Coffee Break**

**11:00 AM - 12:45 PM: Morning Parallel Sessions**

CRL/ 1/06: Gendered Realities: Abuse, Arts, and Online Wellbeing

CRL/ 2/05: AI for EDI: Widening Access, HRM and Individualised Assessments

CRL/ 2/10: The Student Experience: Belonging, Mattering, and Becoming

CRL/ 3/03:

Workshop 3: Entrepreneurial Thinking for a Better World

Workshop 4: Flexible Working Scotland

CRL/ 3/11

Workshop 1: A Framework for Fostering an EDIB Culture in HE

Workshop 2: Integrating Diverse Stakeholder Views in HE

CRL/ The Riady theatre: Diverse Expressions of EDI: Film, Music, Language and Cultural

## **Afternoon & Evening Sessions**

**12:45 - 2:00 PM: Lunch & Poster Presentations, The Chapel**

**2:00 – 3:45 PM: Afternoon Parallel Sessions**

CRL/ 1/06:

Workshop 5: Backlash-Proofing EDI Policies & Practices Against the Culture War

Workshop 6: Addressing Gender Imbalance in Scottish STEM

CRL/ 2/05: EDI in Higher Education: Neurodivergence, Synaesthesia and ADHD

CRL/ 2/10: Skills, Employability, and Flexible Working

CRL/ 3/03: Workshop 9: Equity Implications of Assessment Deadline Extension Policies

CRL/ 3/11:

Workshop 7: Meet the Editor: Publishing EDI Research

Workshop 8: Designing Inclusive Events

CRL/ The Riady theatre: Feature Film Itu Ninu: A film about Climate migrants in a dystopian city under constant surveillance

**3:45 - 4:00 PM: Tea & Coffee, The Foyer**

**4:00 - 5:30 PM: Panel Discussion: Social Mobility Is Higher Education Engine of Opportunity or Gatekeeper?**

Panellists:

Archana Rao Dannamaneni

Professor Nick Antonopoulos

Sara Brachat

Silence Chihuri

Talat Yaqoob

Chair: Peace Echeonwu

Question Moderator: Paolo Gerli

Location: The Riady Theatre

**5:30 - 7:00 PM: Evening Snacks & EDI-themed Live Performances** Spoken Word, Poems, Music, Art, Movies, etc.**, The Foyer and The Riady Theatre**

**7:00 PM: Conference Closing:** Appreciation & Closing Remarks

## Guest Services & Accessibility

CRL/ 2/06: **Cloak room** - This room is designated as a cloakroom, intended for attendees to store coats or other belongings.

CRL/ 2/07: **Sensory and Calm Space -** This room is reserved to provide a quiet and comfortable area for attendees who may need to take a break or who are sensitive to sensory overload.

# Keynote

## Speaker Bio and Abstract

**A person holding a bottle of wine

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Archana Rao Dannamaneni, MBE**, is a Tax Professional Manager and Yorkshire Social Mobility Lead at HM Revenue and Customs. She has recently been awarded an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours for her contribution to Tax Compliance frameworks, amounting to billions of savings to the exchequer.

Archana is passionate about promoting social mobility and has been instrumental in driving initiatives to support underrepresented groups in the workplace and outside. She is heavily involved in Outreach and worked with over 7,200 students over the last five years with her small team of volunteers in local schools, colleges and universities. She is also a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion and is committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

She is a graduate of Edinburgh Napier University, where she earned an MSc in Business Management with a specialisation in Human Resource Management in 2008.

**In her keynote**, Archana will explore levelling opportunity regardless of background. Drawing from her experience as an HMRC Social Mobility Lead, she will discuss working across diverse networks (Race, Gender, LGBT+) and fostering inclusive leadership.

The talk will address research showing those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (SEB) report more barriers to potential, often linked to access or skills. It will also highlight the discomfort around discussing background, stressing the need for openness to achieve genuine inclusion.

While sectors like the Civil Service aim for meritocracy, they can seem inaccessible to those from lower SEB. This keynote will seek to demystify these spaces, aiming to empower individuals to overcome barriers and pursue opportunities based on potential, not background.

Archana’s keynote exploration of opportunity barriers and inclusive pathways will provide crucial context for the later panel discussion, which she also will join. Her insights on demystifying established sectors will directly feed into the conversation, "Social Mobility: Is Higher Education Engine of Opportunity or Gatekeeper?", prompting a deeper look at higher education's specific role in this landscape.

## Panel Topic: Social Mobility: Is Higher Education Engine of Opportunity or Gatekeeper?

## Panellist Bios

**A person in a black robe

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Sara Brachat,** MSc, is a recent Edinburgh Napier graduate in Applied Social Research. During her time of studies, she has served as Student Representative for her cohort, ensuring timely addressing of student matters and fostering discourse between students and faculty.

Sara is devoted to advocacy, diversity, and inclusion, with a deep-rooted belief in equal participation in education. Her passion and research focus on the prevention of early study leavers, premature discontinuation of studies, and adverse mental and societal effects. Through her research and advocacy, she strives to create more inclusive and supportive educational environments for all.

She is dedicated to bridging the gap between research and real-world impact, working toward evidence-based solutions that drive policy changes and institutional improvements in education. Her research has also been recognised by Edinburgh Napier University’s Career Guidance Team, who have engaged with her findings to inform their work.

**A close-up of a person

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Silence Chihuri** founded the Fair Justice System for Scotland (FJSS) Group in 2012. His experience facing barriers entering Scotland's legal profession inspired its vision. He holds Law degrees (Strathclyde, Edinburgh Napier) and an MSc in Human Rights and Diplomacy (Stirling). Silence is currently doing a Law PhD at ENU, analysing racial diversity challenges within Scotland's legal sector, with a focus on the Black African community.

Through FJSS, Silence campaigns for human rights and highlights racial discrimination. He authored "The West Lothian Connection," examining local links to historical slavery. This led to a West Lothian Council Working Group on slavery's legacy, which he co-chairs.

Silence contributed to government and council reviews addressing diversity in museums and historical links to slavery and colonialism in Edinburgh. He is also a member of the Judicial Appointments Board's Diversity Group, working to increase inclusion within the Scottish judiciary.

A person wearing a blue tie

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Prof Nick Antonopoulos** is Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Research & Innovation. Nick joined Edinburgh Napier in January 2019 from the University of Derby, where he was Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and Research Professor in Cloud Computing.

He has more than 20 years of academic and leadership experience, with a very strong background in initiating, leading and delivering improvements at an institutional level.

Nick has an excellent international reputation in his field, evidenced by his papers, books, chairing of prestigious conferences, and his active leadership of broad reaching research partnerships nationally and internationally. He has an extensive network across government, commerce and industry.

A person wearing glasses and smiling

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Talat Yaqoob** FRSE is a consultant, researcher, and campaigner focusing on equality and inclusion. Her work addresses women's rights, anti-racist policy making, and intersectional analysis. She founded Pass The Mic to promote diverse voices in media. Talat also co-founded the Women 5050 campaign, advocating for fair political representation for women in Scotland.

As a consultant, she specialises in intersectional social research, policy influencing, and strategy development, particularly concerning equality in employment and education. She previously directed Equate Scotland, working to advance women in STEM sectors. Talat has extensive experience in training, commentary, and developing campaigns on equality issues and civic participation. She holds degrees in Psychology (Heriot-Watt) and Political Science (Edinburgh).

# Parallel Sessions

The Student Experience: Belonging, Mattering, and Becoming

11:00 am – 12:45 pm, CRL 2/10

Examining Institutional Support for HE Students with ADHD: An Exploratory Study

*Presented by* ***Tristan Lewis***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

This 2024 dissertation study was motivated by my HE experiences across two universities, as a student with ADHD. I conducted interviews (n7) with those providing support at universities and support agencies across the UK. Findings include:

* Funding restrictions impacted on all roles; variations in policy and practice were evident with notable challenges (particularly delays, limited information sharing).
* Variability in access to training, especially for condition-specific training such as ADHD.
* Staff felt pressure/worked hard to compensate for shortfalls in provision.
* The effects of a lack of ADHD medication were multiple.

My study provided invaluable understanding of staff experiences and perspectives. It highlights the need for larger studies and/or focussed in specific areas (e.g. effective working across support roles; policy alignment with student experiences; training needs). It also considered how the lived experiences of the researcher is important in accessing such insight. Better research is key to helping student engagement and success.

Journeys to Belonging and Mattering at ENU - Capturing Diverse Voices to Enhance the Student Experience

*Presented by* ***Christine Haddow and Jacqueline Brodie***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

This presentation seeks to share key points of learning from our two ENU research projects, centred on student belonging, and highlight the value of our upcoming research in this area. Our initial project (Haddow, C., & Brodie, J. (2023) set out to capture how a sense of belonging can be supported through small intervention projects by a diverse range of staff and students throughout the university. We sought to unpack the value of such interventions to students’ sense of belonging in these different contexts and through this analysis devise a model of authentic belonging enhancement.

Reflecting on our students' experiences post-pandemic, our second belonging project sought to capture how assessment design could be used to support a sense of belonging and mattering for UG and TPG students when more traditional opportunities to foster this were poorly attended. The outcome of this project was a road map of areas for module leaders to consider when seeking to support belonging and mattering through assessment.

Finally, at the end of the presentation, we shall share our latest project, Exploring, the question so many of our students currently face during their time at ENU - can I truly afford to belong at university during a cost of living crisis?

Impact of UK Immigration Policy Changes on International Master's Students

*Presented by* ***Paul Ojeriakhi***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

This study responds to the 2024 changes in UK immigration policy, prohibiting dependents from accompanying international Master's students. Advocates of inclusive policies argue that allowing accompanying families enhances learning environments, promotes intercultural communication, and makes the UK a desirable study destination. Other critics (e.g. Universities UK, Higher Education Policy Institute) warn of detrimental effects on university funding, regional economies, and the UK's reputation. A mixed methods study was devised (survey + interviews) with international UK students, comparing those with and without accompanying dependents. It explores academic, personal, and familial aspects of their HE experience, identifying the advantages and difficulties of studying with or without family. The results provide insights into how universities may better support international students and guide legislative conversations and institutional actions. The wider ramifications for academic diversity, institutional viability, and the UK's standing in higher education are also contemplated in this timely study.

From College to University: An Evaluation of the Direct Entrant Transition Programme at Edinburgh Napier Business School

*Presented by* ***Ahmed Hassanien***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

The transition programme is designed to support direct entrants as they prepare for university life through a series of interactive events, workshops, and resources. This programme is delivered in collaboration with key university teams, including Academic Skills (AS), Widening Participation (WP), Student Futures (SF), Edinburgh Napier Students Association (ENSA), and the Counselling & Mental Wellbeing team.

The programme starts in Trimester 1 with organised visits for college students to introduce them to the university, its facilities, the programme structure, course entry requirements and potential job opportunities after graduation. They are also invited to attend classes (i.e. drop-in sessions) with our current students in Trimesters 1 and 2, giving them the chance to experience university teaching and understand how it differs from college. This also helps them become familiar with the university environment and culture.

In June, we host the ‘Let’s Get Started’ event, where students receive important information and take part in workshops focused on both academic and personal development. During this time, a Moodle community platform and a closed Facebook group are launched to keep students engaged and provide pastoral support throughout the summer. To help address any concerns or questions, weekly live chats run in August and September, ensuring students feel supported as they prepare for university life.

In August, students participate in ‘Countdown to Zero’, a four-week online transition course designed specifically for direct entrants. This course provides crucial guidance on university processes, including registration, option choices, and understanding timetables, while also introducing a variety of useful workshops to help students feel prepared and confident before their studies begin.

The transition support continues in Week Zero, the first week of September, with a week-long programme of face-to-face and online workshops covering both academic and non-academic skills. These sessions, organised in collaboration with the university’s support teams, equip students with the tools they need to navigate university life successfully. For those unable to attend in person, a range of online workshops and informational videos is available to ensure accessibility.

A two-page questionnaire was designed to gather student feedback on the transition programme and explore ways to improve it. The questionnaire included statements about students' experiences with different aspects of the programme, such as timing, design, organisation, content, resources, tutor support, and overall engagement and satisfaction.

The preliminary findings suggest that the transition programme provided strong support and guidance, helping direct entrants to integrate smoothly into university life before the academic year began. Further insights were gained into the programme's structure and organisation, identifying areas for future improvements to enhance the overall experience.

Students feeling they matter

*Presented by* ***Ella Taylor-Smith***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Lightning Talk (3 - 5 mins)*

**Abstract**

A sense of mattering means feeling that the university community (students and staff) care about your success. How is this feeling of mattering linked with student engagement and success? In what university contexts or situations do our SCEBE students feel like they do or don’t matter? These questions were prompted by our survey of SCEBE students and we decided to investigate them further in interviews with students. The study is inclusion-oriented as mattering is experienced (or not) by diverse individuals, rather than homogenous cohorts. Our findings illustrate the importance of enabling students’ active participation in the university community - in their learning and beyond. However, students can struggle to take up opportunities for collaboration and friendship, due to working long hours, commuting long distances and/or post-pandemic shyness. What can we do to make a difference and welcome all students?

Gendered Realities: Abuse, Arts, and Online Wellbeing

11:00 am – 12:45 pm, CRL 1/06

Social Media Literacy & Wellbeing Project: Educating and Empowering Teenage Girls

*Presented by* ***Kat Rezai***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

As concerns about social media's (SM) impact on young people's mental health and well-being continue to rise (Dubicka & Theodosiou, 2020; Orben et al., 2022), research is essential to understanding their lived experiences in this digital world. Orben et al. (2022) highlight that excessive SM use particularly impacts teenage girls, increasing their risk of poor mental health. In response, the UK government (2019) has advocated for digital literacy programmes to help protect children from potential harm. Addressing these concerns, the Marketing Group's Society & Wellbeing team is working with Young Women’s Movement to co-develop a social media literacy programme to educate and empower teenage girls. The project's ultimate goal is to foster a healthier relationship between teenage girls and social media, improving their overall wellbeing and digital literacy. Kat Rezai (PI) will discuss the research progress and emphasise the value of partnering with CIC companies to build trust with vulnerable consumers.

Employers' Understanding and Support for Female Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse

*Presented by* ***Richard Whitecross***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Workplace & Society; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

One women in four in Scotland will experience domestic abuse in the course of their lifetime. Domestic abuse and its wider impact continues to not be well understood. Access to civil legal aid is now a recognised barrier to legal advice and assistance, and has significant economic impact on women seeking to contest contact cases in the Sheriff courts. Following a number of research projects, the impact of experiencing domestic abuse on female victims/mothers highlighted a lack of research on the role of employers. This presentation outlines a pilot study to explore how employers in Scotland, understand domestic abuse, and how they address and support female employees who have been or are experiencing domestic abuse

Gender Inequalities in the Edinburgh Arts Festival Sector

*Presented by* ***Benedetta Piccio, Louise Todd and Martin Robertson***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Workplace & Society; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

This presentation is based on research into the challenges and inequalities faced by women working in the Edinburgh arts festival sector. This study analysed the gendered context of women lives, exposing gender inequalities, and advocating for improvements of women's social status as well as social change. The results underline persistent gender inequalities in the arts festivals, and several barriers to women´s career. Caring responsibilities, sexism, such as men being dismissive and paternalistic towards women, lack of implementation of EDI policies, and sexual harassment are some of the challenges and difficult situations women face in the festival sector in Edinburgh. While Edinburgh is renowned as a world festival city, and its key festivals are characterised by progressive and inclusive arts and performances, this study suggests that the working situation of women in the Edinburgh festivals does not have the same degree of progress and women do not have the same career opportunities as men.

AI for EDI: Widening Access, HRM and Individualised Assessments

11:00 am – 12:45 pm, CRL 2/05

Developing Inclusive AI-Driven Robotics Learning Materials for BAME Communities

*Presented by* ***Carl Strathearn and Emilia Sobolewska***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

In conjunction with local children's BAME community groups, First Step Robotics and Passion4Fusion, we are developing innovative learning materials for AI-driven robots through a series of workshops and competitions. The aim is to create bespoke robot kits with self-learning materials, which are more inclusive, relevant, user-friendly and cost-effective. This is important as significant gaps exist in AI education between schools, colleges, and universities, making it even more challenging for BAME communities to access and acquire the necessary materials. This work is crucial because robots are not only an engaging and tangible way of learning core STEM and AI skills, but also an emerging technology with great career prospects. This talk centres around how robots can be used positively in society to enhance STEM and AI education, inclusivity, upskilling and AI ethics, and novel methods for making current learning materials more diverse and accessible in this subject area.

How can the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) enhance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and its sustainability within organisations?: Challenges and Opportunities (A Pilot Study)

*Presented by* ***Maura Sheehan, Max Chipulu, Dotun Ayeni, Paolo Gerli and Iweta Baran***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

Informed by Social Identity Theory and bias theories, this pilot study aims to examine the relationships between Artificial Intelligence (AI), Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)—and their sustainability—in relation to the attraction, selection, and retention (ASR) of minority employee groups.

This pilot study has three key objectives:

To critically evaluate the evidence within the literature through a Rapid Evidence Assessment.

To critically evaluate the evidence within the literature (via an REA) on whether firms proactively monitor evidence of biases.

To obtain data from 5-6 pilot firms on the perceived effectiveness and sustainability of EDI practices from an AI perspective with a focus on (but not exclusive to) ASR and offer recommendations on enhancing organisational receptiveness to and use of AI in ASR practices.

Mitigating Risks of AI Misuse in Education: Individualised Assessments

*Presented by* ***Elena Prokofieva***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

The widespread use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools has significantly impacted the way how the teaching and learning processes are done. For the educators, AI opens the new ways of creating teaching material, which is unique and tailored for the needs of students of the respective subjects. Additionally, the AI-based equipment can be used for report writing, checklists, and even for coursework and exam marking. The information generated using AI must be closely monitored and fact checked to make sure that there are no errors or misinterpretation of the known data.

Students also use AI-based tools to complete parts of their work, such as idea generation, summaries and literature reviews, in some cases generating the models and doing the basic calculations. However it might be leading to potential errors if the information is not critically reviewed, verified and reassessed to their best knowledge.

To mitigate the risks of misuse of Ai-tools in studies, individualization of assessments is necessary. Assignments that require unique problem-solving approaches, real-world applications, or step-by-step explanations can encourage individual learning on the subject. As another option, incorporating presentations and individual calculations in the assessments, can help educators assess the student work and knowledge even with AI-aided assessments.

Diverse Expressions of EDI: Film, Music, Language and Cultural

11:00 am – 12:45 pm, CRL / the Riady theatre

Signs & Gestures: as short film with dialogues in BSL

*Presented by* ***Ita Jansen***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Film screening (15 mins)*

**Abstract**

As a practice-based researcher in film I have worked on different projects that involved diversity and inclusion.

One is a short film (12 minutes) that included a blind actress and an actor using BSL, the short film contains some dialogue in BSL. More information on this short film (Signs and Gestures) can be found here: <https://filmfreeway.com/SignsandGestures>

Other films foreground Indigenous characters and endangered Indigenous languages.

CIMSRS: Community Instrumental Music Service for Rural Scotland

*Presented by* ***Arianna Ranieri***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

‘CIMSRS: Community Instrumental Music Service for Rural Scotland’ is a PhD study that explores the impacts of providing accessible music tuition (upper strings) for adults in rural Scotland, who are often excluded from music learning or engagement due to age and geographic barriers. This presentation discusses the findings from Millport (Isle of Cumbrae)and Auchtermuchty (Fife) projects. The project is set in three rural Scottish communities: Millport (Isle of Cumbrae, North Ayrshire) (September-December 2024); Auchtermuchty (Fife) (January – March 2025); and Glencoe (Highlands) (April – July 2025); the theoretical perspectives and methodology are constructivist and interpretivist, informing ethnographic and fieldwork methodologies. Striking themes have arisen: homogenization will not yield meaningful impact, i.e. using the term ‘rural’ as a descriptor of people; learning templates are tone-deaf; pedagogy must be informed by ethnography to foster agency and sustainability; the importance of a humanizing pedagogy; the importance of reflexivity, as pedagogical methods and values of the educator and researcher influences outcomes.

I Said Something: Small Acts, Big Impact in Addressing Systemic Inequality

*Presented by* ***Mabel Victoria***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Lightning Talk (3 - 5 mins)*

**Abstract**

EDI is often framed as large-scale institutional initiative, but it can also begin with something deeply personal—a moment of speaking up, an act of resistance in everyday life. This presentation explores how individual experiences of racialized scrutiny reflect broader systemic inequities, demonstrating that personal narratives can be powerful tools for change. Through a reading of my flash fiction piece, I Said Something—based on a real-life incident at an airport—I examine how implicit bias operates in mundane interactions and how confronting it, even in small ways, can disrupt patterns of exclusion. By reflecting on the significance of these moments, this presentation highlights the role of personal agency in challenging structural inequality, illustrating that EDI is not only a framework for institutions but a practice embedded in daily life.

EDI in Collaborative Online Independent Learning (COIL) Projects

*Presented by* ***Sibylle Ratz, Mabel Victoria and Sylvain Blanche***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Lightning Talk (3 - 5 mins)*

**Abstract**

This presentation examines how equality, diversity, and inclusivity manifest in a Collaborative Online Independent Learning event (COIL). We will carry out the COIL project for 6 weeks (March to April) as part of the UG 2nd year module “Exploring Culture”. Students will be put in groups with counterparts from universities in Switzerland, China, and South Africa, and will be asked to jointly discuss a case study of their choice featuring a business-related ethical dilemma. Each group will produce a video comparing and contrasting different understandings of ethical principles and cultural sensitivies, and they will come to a decision regarding the dilemma. Importantly, students will also produce individual reflective reports where they will consider and analyse their thoughts and feelings as they worked together in diverse groups across the globe, forging some sort of small culture within their team.

Linguistic Imperialism and Socioeconomic Inequality: An EDI Perspective on English in the Philippines' Linguistic Landscape

*Presented by* ***Mabel Victoria***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI-informed Research Design & Practice; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

This study interrogates the role of English in the linguistic landscape and lived experiences of working-class individuals in the Philippines, highlighting its implications for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Using an indigenous, culturally sensitive methodology grounded in Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000), the research examines how linguistic imperialism manifests in everyday life.

Findings reveal that while English is perceived as a critical pathway to socioeconomic mobility, its dominance also perpetuates exclusionary structures that constrain access to employment and education. Participants articulate how limited English proficiency limits their opportunities, yet their narratives reflect an internalized belief in English as an aspirational necessity rather than a systemic barrier. These insights underscore how linguistic hierarchies reinforce broader inequalities, making language a key site for both privilege and marginalization.

Drawing on Phillipson’s (2008) linguistic imperialism and Gramsci’s (1971) cultural hegemony, this study situates language within the broader discourse of EDI by demonstrating how linguistic power dynamics shape access to resources and opportunities. The paper argues for a critical reassessment of language policies and pedagogical approaches that, often inadvertently, reinforce linguistic inequities. By centring the voices of those most affected, this research contributes to a more inclusive and equitable understanding of linguistic diversity and the urgent need to decolonize language practices in postcolonial societies.

References

Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Edited and translated by Quintin

Hoare & Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Pe-Pua, R., & Protacio-Marcelino, E. a. (2000). Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino psychology): A legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez. Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 3, 49–71. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-839X.00054

Phillipson, R. (2008). The Linguistic Imperialism of Neoliberal Empire 1 . Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 5(1), 1–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427580701696886

Skills, Employability, and Flexible Working

2:00 – 3:45 pm, CRL 2/10

Training for work-based learning workplace mentors, especially to ensure inclusion

*Presented by* ***Ella Taylor-Smith***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Workplace & Society; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

Workplace mentors play crucial roles in supporting degree apprentices and work-based learning students. This may be the first time these apprentices/students work in this kind of environment and the mentors need to welcome and orient them, as well as guiding their work-based learning.

This study investigated what training the mentors remembered receiving from the university and what they felt was lacking. Mentors were specifically asked about inclusion training, but few remembered receiving any from their partner universities, neither bespoke training or links to materials from organisations like Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Institute for apprenticeships and technical education (IfATE) or Equate Scotland. With respect to the mentors’ lack of free time, we worked with SCEBE students to create an inclusion-focused resource, featuring a Key Elements of Inclusion for Mentors infographic an Intro to Inclusion animation.

Widya Indonesia: Empowering Indonesian Women in STEM

*Presented by* ***Nathalia Tjandra, Sally Smith, Anita Lie,Tri Lestari, Fenika Wulani and Felycia Edy Soetaredjo***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

Widya Indonesia is a research-driven initiative designed to enhance employment pathways for Indonesian women in STEM. It addresses gender inequality in the STEM workforce in and empowers graduates to pursue high-skilled careers Indonesia, where only two out of 10 female STEM graduates pursue a career in STEM fields (Kemenppa, 2022). Women encounter various obstacles such as familial obligations, traditional and cultural constraints, and prevailing mindsets (Bhwana, 2022). Focus groups with 65 female students, graduates, and professionals explored their motivations, role models, challenges, and aspirations in STEM. The findings led to a workshop blueprint for academic and career advisers to support female students in STEM fields; resources such as website hosting role model case studies; and a roll-out of training to 41 advisers and 110 women: university and high school STEM students. This presentation will share the findings from the focus groups and the transition to tangible workshops and resource development.

Establishing the SDG5 Living Lab for Gender Equality in Entrepreneurship

*Presented by* ***Emma Ives***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Lightning Talk (3 - 5 mins)*

**Abstract**

Bright Red Triangle developed a partnership with Women's Enterprise Scotland in 2024 to establish our SDG5 Living Lab (SDG5 being the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal number 5 for Gender Equality). We used this collaboration as an opportunity to address an under-representation of women both in those accessing our services but also more widely in entrepreneurship. We would love to share our work so far, as well as our aspirations for the SDG5 Living Lab becoming a platform to amplify research from across ENU and the sector. We would welcome the opportunity to connect with others at the conference on what the SDG5 Living Lab might look like going forward - what does the ENU community want to see.

Breaking Barriers: Embedding EDI in Green Skills Development for a Net-Zero Built Environment

*Presented by* ***Anitha Karthik***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Workplace & Society; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are fundamental to any discussion on organisational resilience and societal progress. While organisations have made progress in EDI trends and initiatives, disparities persist in the workplace and society, particularly in access to skills and leadership roles. A clear gap remains in how EDI investments are widely acknowledged in theory while their practical implementations often falls short. (FCA, 2023), failing to address sector-specific barriers and systematic challenges and underlining the need to change ‘One-Size-Fits-All’ approach.

In transition towards a Net-Zero Built Environment, the need to embed EDI in green skills development is essential. Key learnings from sectors like finance, tech and strategic partnerships can inform ways to bridge industry-wide diversity gaps while addressing critical skills shortages. This presentation will explore and address how shifting from compliance-based EDI efforts to targeted skills intervention to equip underrepresented groups with equitable access to emerging opportunities

EDI in Higher Education: Neurodivergence, Synaesthesia and ADHD

2:00 – 3:45 pm, CRL 2/05

Breaking Barriers: Collaboration between Enable Scotland and Edinburgh Napier University for Neuro-Divergent School Leavers

*Presented by* ***Joan McLatchie***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

This presentation explores how Enable Scotland and Edinburgh Napier University have successfully collaborated to help young neuro-divergent school leavers into further education and employment In 2022, the Business School entered into a collaboration with the charity Enable Scotland to offer an academic course in Applied Business Skills, leading to a certificated 20-credit award at SCQF level 4. The course aims to tackle the widespread lack of opportunities for young people with learning disabilities to enter higher education. Students undertake a work experience opportunity with a leading global employer and gain a university qualification. In this presentation, we will discuss the content and facilitation of the programme, sharing the challenges experienced and the successes achieved. Research findings have suggested that the students find the programme valuable and effective in enhancing their learning, and boosting their confidence and self-esteem.

Embracing Synaesthesia in Research: A Personal Journey

*Presented by* ***Hazel McPhillips***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Higher Education; Standard Presentation (20 - 25 mins)*

**Abstract**

Around 4.4% of the population experience synaesthesia,1 a phenomenon that causes the crossing over of the senses.2 Described by the American Psychology Association 3 as ‘everyday fantasia’, synaesthesia is where one sense is activated and causes an involuntary and autonomic response in another sense.4

As a member of staff and PhD student, I hid my synaesthesia for fear of exclusion or ridicule until I began to write my findings chapter. Using interpretive phenomenological analysis requires a double hermeneutic approach in which the researcher aims to make sense of the participants making sense of their experience 5, and for me, this involved colour and sound. I chose to embrace this and use my ‘gift’ within the analysis and presentation of my thesis. I aimed to provide readers of my research with an insight into my analysis process and to allow others to feel comfortable sharing who they are within their work.

References:

1 - Simner, J., Mulvenna, C., Sagiv, N. et al. (2006). Synaesthesia: The prevalence of atypical cross-modal experiences. Perception, 35(8), 1024–1033.

2 - Cytowic, R.E. (1989). Synaesthesia: A union of the senses. Berlin: Springer.

3 - Carpenter, S. (2001, March 1). Everyday fantasia: The world of synesthesia. Monitor on Psychology, 32(3). https://www.apa.org/monitor/mar01/synesthesia

4 - Hughes, J., Simner, J., Baron-Cohen, S., Treffert, D., & Ward, J. (2017). Is Synaesthesia More Prevalent in Autism Spectrum Conditions? Only Where There Is Prodigious Talent. Multisensory Research, 30(3-5), 391-408. https://doi.org/10.1163/22134808-00002558

5 – Smith, A, Flower P, Larkin M (2009) Interpretative phenomenological analysis: theory, method and research. Sage Publishing, USA.

Impact of Working from Home on Autistic Employees' Motivation

*Presented by* ***Emma Sullivan***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Workplace & Society; Lightning Talk (3 - 5 mins)*

**Abstract**

I am working on my 4th year business management dissertation focusing on the impact working from home has on autistic employees motivation. My research combines both an online survey for professionals who have experience working with autistic adults, and an autoethnography. I am using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory to underpin my research. As I am still in the process of gathering and analysing my data I do not have any findings yet to share, however I will have my final dissertation completed by the end of April.

Feature Film

2:00 – 3:45 pm, CRL / the Riady theatre

Feature Film Sci-Fi: Itu Ninu

*Presented by* ***Ita Jansen***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Film screening (80 mins)*

**Abstract**

As a practice-based researcher in film I have worked on different projects that involved diversity and inclusion.

The feature drama sci-fi film Itu Ninu (72 minutes) is a film about two climate migrants in a dystopic future city under constant surveillance. the film explores themes such as language, technology, climate justice and migration. It has won multiple awards, among others for Best Feature at the Berlin Sci-fi film festival and for Best Dystopian film at the Beyond Film Festival.

I would like to share one of these films at the Inclusion conference. My preference would be to show Itu Ninu as this is my most recent piece of work and allows for conversations on many issues. I am however mindful that it is quite long and am therefore also sharing the shorter films as an alternative.

Workshops

11:00 am – 12:45 pm, CRL 3/11

Workshop 1: Beyond Celebratory Days, Flying Flags & Box-Ticking: A Framework for Fostering an EDIB Culture in Higher Education

*Presented by* ***Afiya Holder***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI Competency Workshops for Researchers, Professionals, and Citizens; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

Globally, there has been a rise in headlines reporting universities being investigated and/or being sued for discrimination, unfair hiring and firing practices and unfair treatment of marginalised academics. This has led to a growing trend of Higher-Education institutions adopting practices such as putting forward EDI statements or committees in response to the rising debates and cases of systematic and implicit biases in the workplace. This workshop aims to go beyond the new rhetoric to address equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) challenges within academia. With a focus on fostering inclusive leadership, mitigating unconscious bias, and creating systemic institutional change, this interactive session invites participants to engage in practical activities to create a safe no-judgment space to find actionable, transformative, and inclusive solutions. The workshop covers key areas such as decision-making frameworks for inclusive leadership, strategies to counteract microaggressions, and the role of policy in advancing workplace EDI. In participatory style, the workshop will include engaging activities such as role-playing, and collaborative policy development. The workshop aims to attract senior and early career academics from all spectrums - from those who may be merely curious to learn more to those committed to building a healthier work culture that supports all faculty but most importantly the underrepresented and marginalised.

Workshop 2: Integrating Diverse Stakeholder Views in University Projects and Policies

*Presented by* ***Amrit (Imi) Dencer-Brown***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI-informed Research Design & Practice; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

University-based projects, policies and position statements all benefit from considering diverse stakeholders in their construction and delivery. Part of ENU's Equality Impact Assessments asks us to understand how our research can impact on protected characteristic groups or other groups of interest. It also encourages us to integrate the views of both students and staff from a wide-range of lived experiences and backgrounds.

This short talk will cover different aspects of Equality Impact Assessments and how they can be applied to projects, policies and position statements in order to drive forward EDI-initiatives regardless of the type of work we are doing. It highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder consultation and input into research design and delivery as well as ethical implications to consider when applying for project funding and carrying out research.

11:00 am – 12:45 pm, CRL 3/03

Workshop 3: Igniting Your Impact: Entrepreneurial Thinking for a Better World

*Presented by* ***Emma Ives***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Workplace & Society; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

This interactive workshop empowers staff, students, and alumni to drive positive change in their work, lives, and communities. We'll explore how entrepreneurial skills and design-thinking can be applied beyond traditional business ventures, fostering impact in diverse settings. Whether you're passionate about social justice, environmental sustainability, or simply improving your community, this workshop helps translate ideas into action.

Bright Red Triangle, Edinburgh Napier University's enterprise team will draw from their expertise in supporting individuals to transform ideas into reality. This workshop empowers participants to recognise their agency and encourages them to consider applying their skills and experience towards values led, responsible ventures - whether in business, their workplace or through community projects. We want to ignite your impact and build a better future.

Workshop 4: Flexible Working Scotland: Connecting forward thinking employers with flexible talent so both can thrive

*Presented by* ***Lynn Houmdi***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in the Workplace & Society; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

2 in 5 people in Scotland cannot work without flexible working.

85% of Scottish workers have or want flexible working. Yet only 30% of jobs are advertised as flexible. And Scottish businesses face staff shortages.

For many people, life circumstances dictate that flexibility and culture are preeminent criteria in their job search - more important than salary or job title. But none of the prevailing platforms enable filtering by working pattern, nor can employers showcase accreditations indicative of culture and values.

Flexible Working Scotland (FWS) is an inclusive community of 22k people looking to work flexibly, recruit flexibly and advocate for greater flexibility and equality at work. I am a Bright Red Triangle pitch winner. The FWS jobs board is in development and brings together flexible talent and forward-thinking employers so both can thrive. I would love to demonstrate and test the prototype with potential users at the ENclusion conference.

My aim in the session is to enable potential candidates and employers to test and provide input on the prototype of a jobs board I am developing. For many people, life circumstances dictate that flexibility and culture are preeminent criteria in their job search - more important than salary or job title. But none of the prevailing platforms enable filtering by working pattern, nor can employers showcase accreditations indicative of culture and values. The Flexible Working Scotland jobs board matches flexible talent with forward-thinking employers so both can thrive.

The audience for this workshop is potential users – candidates and employees who have or want flexible working patterns, and employers who offer flexible working or are interested in learning how offering flexible working can enlarge and diversify their potential talent pool.

2:00 – 3:45 pm, CRL 1/06

Workshop 5: Backlash-Proofing EDI: Embedding Policies and Practices Amidst the Culture War

*Presented by* ***Ciaran Mcfadden***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI Competency Workshops for Researchers, Professionals, and Citizens; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

Although EDI initiatives have become a common part of the UK organisational landscape, recently they are facing increased resistance and backlash. From allegations of "reverse discrimination" in recruitment, to the spread of mis- and disinformation about EDI policies and practices, organisations must navigate complex challenges to maintain meaningful progress.

This interactive workshop will explore the context and narratives driving EDI resistance, and equip participants with practical strategies to "backlash-proof" their policies and practices.

Through collaborative, case-based discussions, participants will:

Analyse common forms of EDI resistance and the messaging used to undermine initiatives.

Develop proactive communication strategies to counter backlash, misinformation, and claims of unfairness.

Share best practices for ensuring EDI policies remain robust, adaptable, and legally sound.

As resistance to EDI becomes more pronounced in the UK and beyond, this session will provide attendees with the tools to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to backlash effectively.

Workshop 6: Addressing Gender Imbalance in the Scottish STEM Sector

*Presented by* ***Juliet Dunstone and Ellen Davis-Walker***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI Competency Workshops for Researchers, Professionals, and Citizens; (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

Despite advances in gender equality across the UK, the Scottish STEM sector still has a significant gender imbalance. Equate conducted pioneering research with women and non-binary professionals in STEM sectors, and with STEM organisations in Scotland. This data gives us a detailed snapshot of the impacts of this gender inequity. Here we will present a summary of this research and some proposed policies and practices that can be adopted by employers, government and individuals to close this gender gap.

Recommendations from Equate’s evidence gathering also identified a need for professional networks for women to develop within their STEM careers. Respondents to our surveys also identified assertive communication training as a “clear action point” for professional development. This session will therefore deliver a condensed training. We will explore strategies for developing communication in the workplace and ask the role that it can play in advancing a more inclusive environment.

2:00 – 3:45 pm, CRL 3/11

Workshop 7: Meet the Editor: Publishing EDI Research

*Presented by* ***Jason Ran***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI-informed Research Design and Practice; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

TBA:

Workshop 8: Access Denied: The cost of inaccessible conferences and how to design for everyone

*Presented by* ***Jessica McClure***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

Academia is finally recognising the importance of putting diverse and underrepresented voices in the spotlight— but what happens when some people can't even get through the front door… let alone onto a stage to enter into the spotlight?

Although the ‘equal access to education without discrimination’ is a right which is enshrined by the UN’s CRPD, the UK’s Equality Act (2010) and a host of other comparable policies world-wide; disabled academics have described finding accessibility information and disability support at conferences nothing short of a herculean task. From the euphoria of a truly inclusive and accessible conference experience, to the devastation, isolation and injustice of exclusionary practices, Jessica will lean on her research and experiences working with the disability community to shine a light on the lived experiences and insights of those who are so frequently excluded.

This interactive workshop will encourage you to engage with the consequences inaccessible conference design has, not only on disabled academics, but academia as a whole. Additionally, it will touch on the UK’s current disability landscape, review relevant models, discuss the key elements of inclusive design, and highlight essential resources. By the end of the workshop, Jessica hopes to have passed on her passion for inclusive design and have encouraged you to adopt the mind- and skill set needed to help advocate for and create academic spaces for everyone.

2:00 – 2:45 pm, CRL 3/03

Workshop 9: Equity Implications of Assessment Deadline Extension Policies in Higher Education

*Presented by* ***Jackie Cameron, Mavis Gutu and Simone Kurtzke***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Interactive Workshop (45 mins)*

**Abstract**

Employing a participatory "walkshop" format (Feinberg, 2016; Prost et al., 2023), this workshop explores the equity implications of assessment deadline extension policies in higher education. Drawing on data from a UK university business school (2018-2023), it examines the impact of these policies on diverse student demographics, including under-represented and intersectional groups. The session evaluates whether current practices fulfil their inclusive intent or perpetuate systemic inequities. Leveraging the framework of constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996) and EDI principles, the session aims to collaboratively design an equity-driven policy roadmap. Aligned with EDI conference themes, the workshop emphasises evidence-based approaches for fostering equality, diversity, and inclusion in academic policy. It integrates intersectionality and systemic insights (Crenshaw, 1989; Robinson, 2016) to propose actionable solutions (Gibbs, 1988). Attendees engage in discussions and co-create frameworks addressing equity challenges. Outcomes include enhanced understanding of policy impacts, a refined equity-focused framework, and strategies for embedding EDI principles into policy design.

Posters

12:45 – 2:00 pm, CRL / the Chapel

Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making in the UK Construction Industry

*Presented by* ***Peace Opuruiche Echeonwu***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI-informed Research Design & Practice; Poster Presentation*

**Abstract**

In the construction industry, approximately 65% of project failure stems from a magnitude of challenging factors, which is often linked to human error factor (HEF) and the increasing complexity and technical rigour in the UK construction industry. The ability to navigate through these challenges requires not just a technical skillset but also a ‘Soft skillset’. Despite the significance of these findings, there remains a significant gap in the perception, uptake, and applications of Emotional intelligence (EI) within the UK construction industry, particularly in relation to its impact on construction professional performance and improving productivity. This study investigated the association between EI and the decision-making of construction professionals in the construction industry for improving productivity. The aim was to unravel the level of association between EI models and decision-making for construction professionals, as well as to understand the perception of construction professional EI and the critical role it plays in their decision-making in improving productivity, the success of projects and the safety of project team members. Data were collected using a mixed-method research design involving quantitative and qualitative studies. Twenty-two construction professionals participated in the semi-structured (open-ended) interview, and forty construction professionals completed a survey questionnaire. It was analysed using the six-phase reflexive thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2022). From the qualitative method, the study of data showed a correlation between individual perceived EI competence and decision-making settings rather than the overall scores. There are practical implications for the construction industry and potential implications for the project team members. Overall, the study found that there is a more vital link between decision-making and EI than technical skillsets, particularly for settings involving other abilities. The result indicated that EI is a significant deficiency, and understanding of EI in the UK construction industry is a crucial determinant factor of the construction professional’s performance and improved productivity. This research is significant to both researchers and industry professionals as it sheds light on the ways in which construction professionals perceive information and make decisions. However, the study contributes to the professional practices and body of knowledge in the construction industry. The objective is to assess construction professionals’ perception of EI competence in relation to decision-making during project execution to improve productivity in mega projects.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Gait Speed and Physical Function Assessments

*Presented by* ***Alex Mbuli***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI-informed Research Design & Practice; Poster Presentation*

**Abstract**

Physical function assessments such as gait speed and handgrip strength are widely used as health indicators. Normative values often ignore race and ethnicity. This scoping review examines this disparity in measures of gait speed, the Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB), and grip strength. A comprehensive search across PubMed, Science Direct, Web of Science, Medline, SportDiscus identified 35 relevant studies. We found that 86% of studies examining gait speed showed significant differences between racial and ethnically diverse groups. Generally Black participants consistently walked more slowly than White participants. Grip strength and SPPB performance also demonstrated racial and ethnic variations. These findings underscore the need for considering race and ethnicity in physical function assessments and developing normative datasets for diverse populations to improve clinical practice and ensure equitable healthcare.

Co-Creation of a Continuing Professional Development Toolkit focused on self-management of respiratory health issues in people with learning disabilities

*Presented by* ***Lisa O’Leary***

***Co-authors: Daniel Dicksit, Nicola Ring, Nicola Roberts, Margaret Dunham***

*Stream(s) & Format: EDI in Action: Impacts and Interventions; Poster Presentation*

**Introduction**

Individuals with ID (intellectual Disabilities) need self-management support from nurses (all fields) to avoid risk of hospital admissions due to respiratory illness. We aimed to co-design a CPD toolkit focused on providing nurses with competencies to facilitate self-management of respiratory health conditions for individuals with ID.

**Methods**

N=108 pre-registration UK based nursing students completed a survey on competency to meet respiratory needs of individuals with ID. Workshops were undertaken with stakeholders (N=38) to explore education priorities for pre-registration nursing students, to support self-management of respiratory conditions.

**Results**

N=45/108 nursing students reported a lack of understanding of respiratory guidelines for patients with an ID. A prototype of a respiratory self-management CPD toolkit was coproduced in the follow up workshop.

**Discussion**

Enhanced education is required for nursing student (all fields) so that they achieve competence to support people with ID who have respiratory health conditions. The CPD toolkit will enable development of these competencies.

**Funded by Burdett Trust for Nursing**