



Royal Academy
of Engineering



Diversity and Inclusion Progression Framework Report 2025



Joint report for
science bodies and
professional engineering
institutions





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Foreword

The Science Council and the Royal Academy of Engineering are proud of our decade-long partnership to develop the EDI Progression Framework as a key tool to help secure greater equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in engineering and science.

To be sustainable, our professions must be able to recruit from all parts of society and retain and progress that diverse talent. By supporting professional bodies in their Progression Framework self-assessments, and delivering regular science and engineering benchmarking reports, we hold up a mirror for our organisations to reflect on their progress and what more they can do to advance EDI through their range of functions and activities.

Creating more inclusive cultures is a continuous process of self-reflection, planning and action. The Progression Framework is a valuable tool supporting each of these elements and contributes to meeting the needs of the engineering and science workforce of the future.

With a welcome increase in the number of professional bodies taking part this year, it is encouraging to see how the Framework has supported measurable progress, particularly the strong areas of performance in governance and leadership, communications and marketing, and employment.

Where challenges continue, for example in data collection, there are signs of progress. Building trust and meaningful engagement with memberships, ensuring they feel represented, heard and supported, is key to further progression.

We thank the numerous professional bodies that have shared their own expertise, learning, resources, and approaches to creating more inclusive institutions. We thank all the organisations who engaged with the Progression Framework and contributed their self-assessments that led to this report and the recommendations for further action across science and engineering.

Professor Della Freeth
CEO, Science Council

Dr Hayaatun Sillem CBE
CEO, Royal Academy of Engineering
CEO, Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering



Executive summary

Inclusion is not a destination but a continual process. To serve society well and meet the great challenges of our times, engineering and science must welcome, nurture, retain and learn from diverse talents and perspectives. This is easy to say, harder to do. Professional bodies and learned societies in these sectors have a role to lead the work in developing and embedding inclusive practices.

The Progression Framework

This report presents findings of the 2025 Progression Framework benchmarking exercise for science bodies and professional engineering institutions (PEIs).

The Progression Framework is a tool for professional bodies and learned societies to assess and monitor progress on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The Progression Framework assesses practice in relation to ten areas of organisational activity against a five-level maturity model, ranging from level 0 (not started) to level 4 (embedding). The Progression Framework is developed in collaboration between the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Science Council.

In 2025, 45 organisations participated in the benchmarking, which included 26 science bodies, and 26 PEIs. Seven of these organisations were both a PEI and science body.

Self-assessment overview

Science bodies and PEIs demonstrated strongest areas of performance in:

- Governance and leadership
- Communications and marketing
- Employment.

In each of these areas, the median self-assessed score was **level 3, progressing**. Additionally, PEIs achieved level 3 in meetings, conferences and events. All other areas achieved a median of level 2, launching.

Progress has been made since the 2021 benchmark. The strongest areas represent progression from level 2 to level 3. Accreditation of education and training has progressed from level 1, getting ready, to level 2.

Although organisations report ambition for greater use of data to inform interventions and measure impact, collecting and monitoring data slightly lags other areas of practice, and the median score for monitoring and measuring remains at level 2. Membership diversity data collection is common, but disclosure rates are often low.



Recommendations

1. Enhance data collection, insight and transparency including both demographic data and qualitative data about experiences of equity and inclusion.

2. Strengthen strategy and leadership to drive structural inclusion. Diversify leadership and embed EDI into strategy, providing accountability and a framework for impact measurement.

3. Expand capacity with collaborations, partnerships and volunteer engagement Volunteer engagement and collaborations with external partners can effectively expand capacity, reach and impact of EDI efforts.

4. Foster trust and meaningful engagement. To overcome cultural inertia and scepticism to EDI, foster trust through transparency, engagement, and improved experience for all.

5. Ensure accessibility and inclusion as core foundations. Accessibility and greater support enables full participation for everyone.

6. Nurture an intersectional approach that considers how multiple, overlapping identities shape experiences. EDI actions need to reflect real-world complexity.

7. Strengthen sector leadership in a changing environment. Collaborate to support collective progress and enable shared navigation of external pressures.



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Section 1

Introduction

Inclusion is not a destination but a continual process. To serve society well and meet the great challenges of our times, engineering and science must welcome, nurture, retain and learn from diverse talents and perspectives. This is easy to say, harder to do. Professional bodies and learned societies in these sectors have a role to lead the work in developing and embedding inclusive practices.

This report presents summarised findings of the 2025 Diversity and Inclusion Progression Framework benchmarking exercise for science bodies and professional engineering institutions (PEIs). Separate sector reports provide comprehensive results for the PEI and science body sectors individually.

The Progression Framework

The Science Council and Royal Academy of Engineering are proud of their decade-long partnership to develop the EDI Progression Framework—a practical resource for driving meaningful change by creating more inclusive cultures. The Framework supports ongoing progress through structured self-assessment,

regular benchmarking against peers, and the insights and actions that flow from this process. The 2025 benchmarking exercise is the third benchmark, with previous benchmarking exercises conducted in 2017 and 2021.

The Progression Framework assesses practice in relation to ten areas of organisational activity against a five-level maturity model as summarised in **Figure 1**. It also explores progress, challenges, plans, and diversity data practices. The ten areas of activity assessed are:

1. Governance and leadership
2. Membership and professional registration
3. Meetings, conferences and events
4. Education, training and examinations
5. Accreditation of education and training
6. Prizes, awards and grants
7. Communications and marketing
8. Outreach and engagement
9. Employment
10. Monitoring and measuring.

Further details can be found in the sector reports and on the [Science Council](#) and [Royal Academy of Engineering](#) websites.

Level 0 Not yet started	Level 1 Getting Ready	Level 2 Launching	Level 3 Progressing	Level 4 Embedding
Has not yet started considering EDI in this area, or this area is not applicable.	A case for change for EDI is emerging.	Actions are being launched.	Skills and capabilities are developing and signs of progress are present.	There is evidence of culture transformation and continuous improvement.

Figure 1 The maturity levels of the Progression Framework



Section 2

Participating organisations

In 2025, 45 organisations participated in the benchmarking, which included both PEIs and science bodies. This included 26 PEIs, and 26 science bodies. Seven of these organisations were both a PEI and science body. This represents participation of:

- 72% of eligible science bodies
- 60% of eligible PEIs.

Participation of both PEIs and science bodies has steadily increased since the first benchmarking exercise in 2017. This is shown in **Figure 2**.

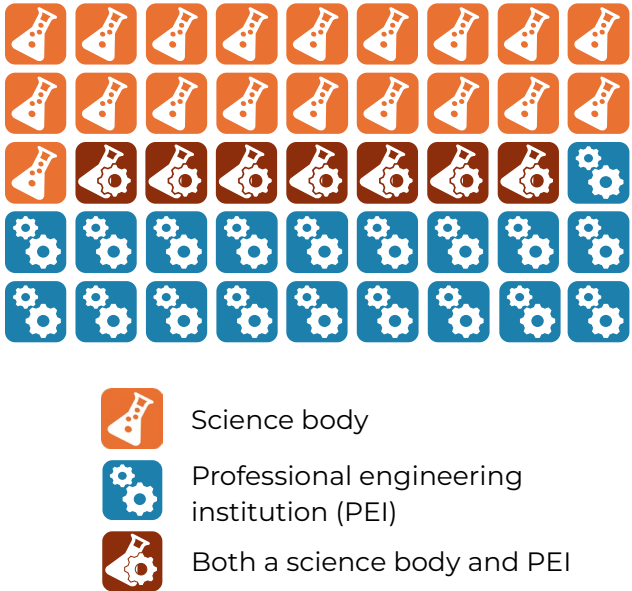


Figure 3 Participating organisations by type

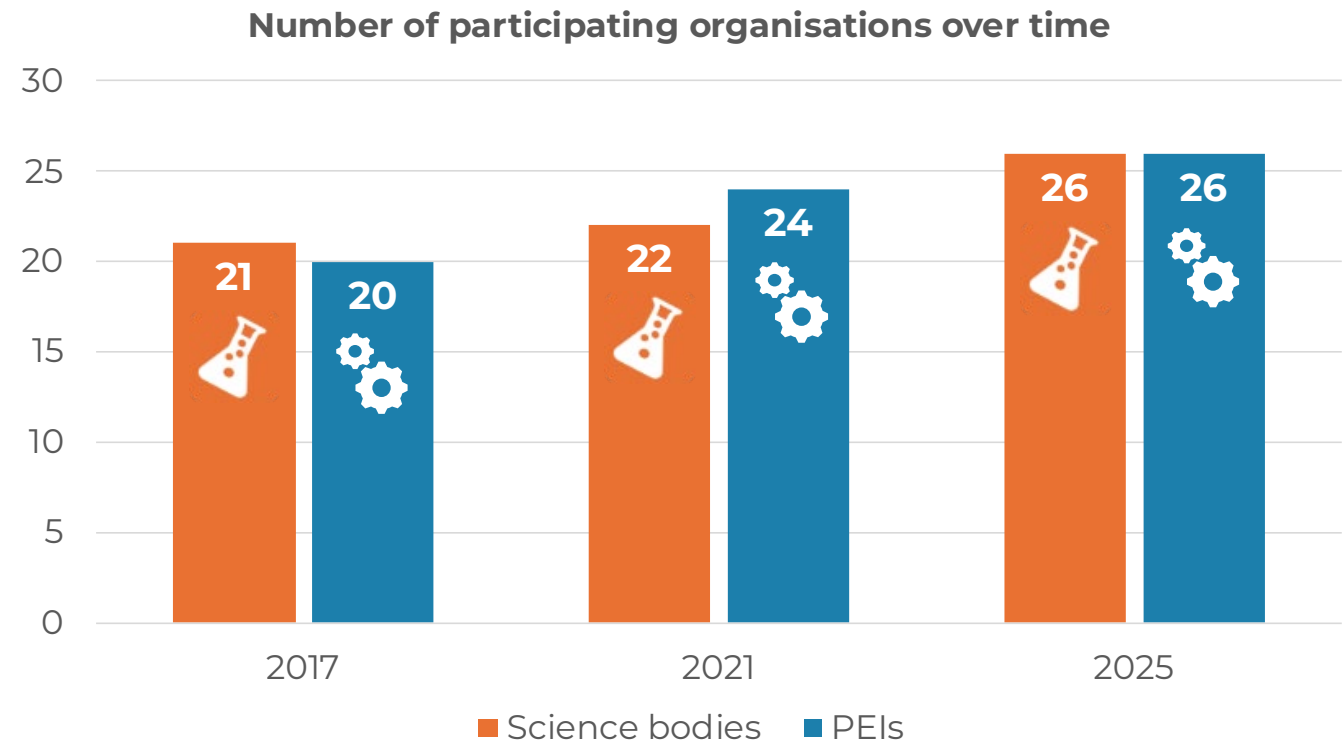


Figure 2 History of participation over the three benchmarks

Section 3

Progression Framework Self-assessment results





Sector overview

Results of the self-assessment show actions are underway across all areas of the Framework. The radar chart in **Figure 3** shows how PEIs and science bodies self-assessed their performance. Overall both groups report similar levels of progress, with the strongest areas of performance for both in:

- Governance and leadership
- Communications and marketing
- Employment.

In each of these areas, the median self-assessed score was **level 3, progressing**. At this level, the case for change is well established, and qualitative data is being gathered and shared. Sustained senior-level support is in place, and skills and capabilities being built. There are high

levels of collaboration, and clear signs of change emerging.

Additionally, PEIs reached level 3 in meetings, conferences, and events.

Of the 45 organisations, 16 reached level 4, embedding (the highest level of maturity) on at least one area of the Progression Framework, and 37 achieved at least one level three, indicating that most organisations demonstrate strong performance in at least one area.

Both science bodies and PEIs recorded lowest mean scores in monitoring and measuring; education and training; and accreditation of education and training, pointing to these as shared areas with the most need for further development.

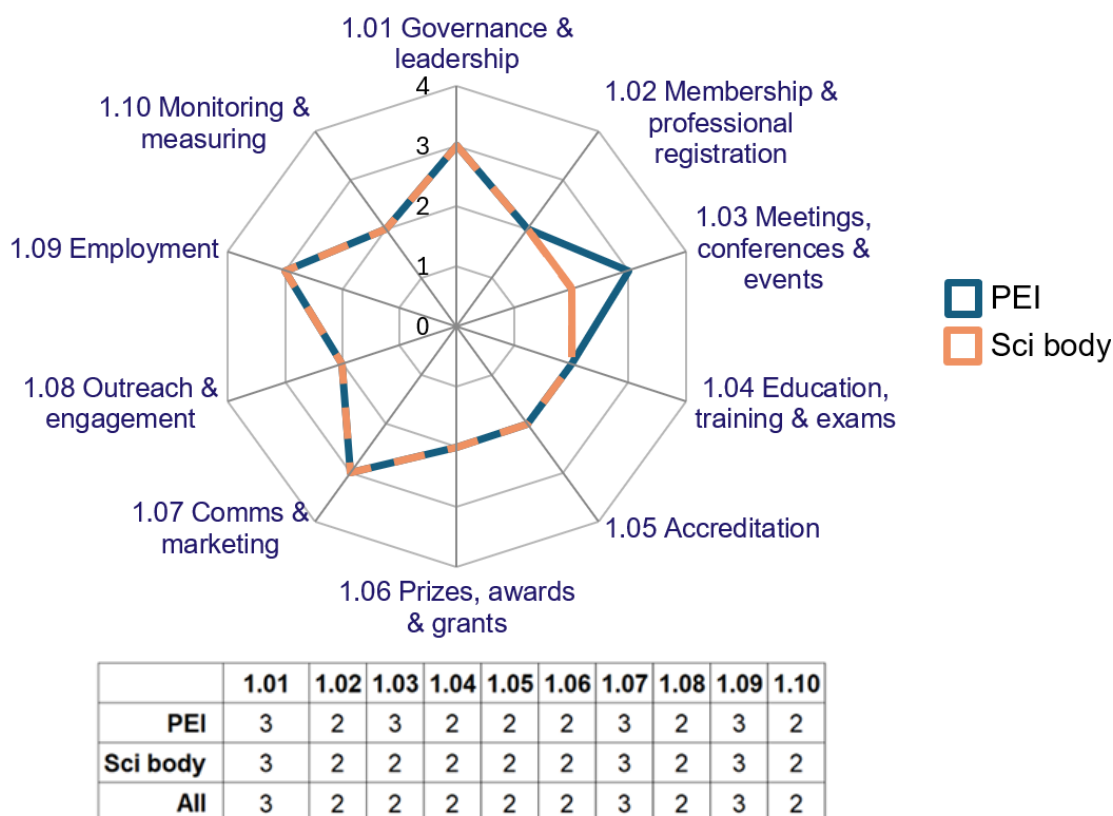


Figure 3 Median scores for each section of the Progression Framework Part 1 for PEIs, science bodies, and all participating organisations combined. Median scores were calculated after removing sections indicated as not applicable.



Progress since the previous benchmarks

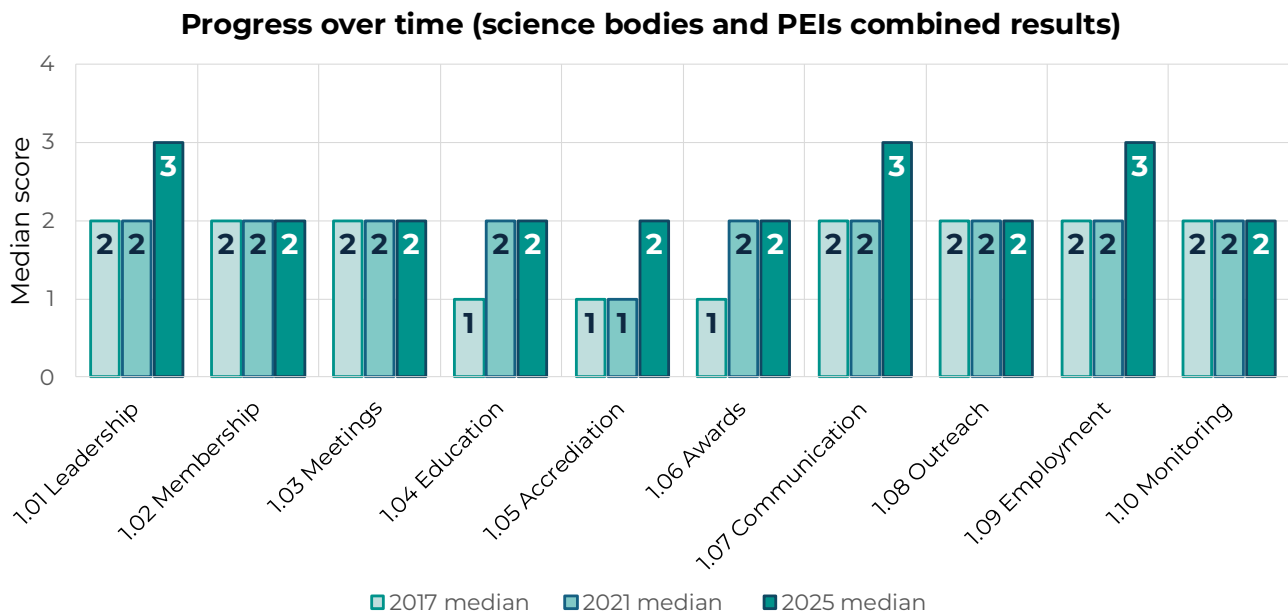


Figure 4 EDI progress over time

Progress has been made since the 2021 benchmark. Examining PEIs and science bodies combined results shows the median scores on three Progression Framework areas have risen from level 2, launching, to level 3, progressing (see **Figure 4**):

- Governance and leadership
- Communications and marketing
- Employment.

Additionally, PEIs' sector median on meetings, conferences and events has risen to level 3. Accreditation of education and training has progressed from level 1, getting ready, to level 2.

Between the 2017 and 2021 benchmarks there was progression only on a single Framework area of activity.

More granular comparisons with the previous benchmarks are unfortunately not possible as historic data of mean

scores and spread of results are not available.

In the four sections showing no change in median score since 2021, it is possible that maturity is developing, but slowly. Change is not significant enough for an increment (or regression) in median score. There may have been a change that could be reflected in mean scores.

It should be noted that in 2017 the Framework had only eight sections, becoming ten in 2021. The first version of the Framework grouped accreditation with education and training, and outreach with communications and marketing. The Framework was updated again prior to the 2025 benchmark, but there were no changes that restructured sections. The three benchmarks of 2017, 2021, and 2025 are therefore broadly comparable to each other.



Progress by Progression Framework area

Governance and leadership

The 2025 benchmarking results for governance and leadership show clear progress from the previous benchmarks, with the **combined sector median reaching level 3, progressing**. The case for change is becoming established, with senior level support that links EDI with organisations' broader strategic objectives, and assigns responsibility to named leaders.

Almost 70% of participating science bodies and PEIs commented that they have taken action to **embed EDI within existing committees**, including at the most senior levels of the governance structure. This includes appointing EDI representatives, striving for diverse appointments, and ensuring that EDI is a regular agenda item. Over half of participating organisations have established formal **EDI roles and groups in the governance structure**.

Membership and professional registration

The 2025 result for membership and professional registration shows no change to the median score from the previous benchmarks, which is **level 2, launching**.

At this level, organisations have clearly stated their ambition to increase diversity of membership and registration, assigned responsibilities for formulating plans, and shared information so assessors have awareness of EDI in decision-making.

“BPS has made strides forward in EDI over the past four years. We now have an EDI Strategy Board, and sub-groups and committees focused on specific areas of EDI and human rights work from publications to inclusive language guidance. We have introduced Equality Impact Assessments and risk management procedures across society structures.”

Adam Jowett
Outgoing Chair of the EDI Board
The British Psychological Society



A thematic analysis of comments shows the most common interventions are about **inclusive communications**. These include ensuring that the website, social media, and communications to members use inclusive language and imagery, and meet standards for accessibility (e.g. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0). Diversity of membership is celebrated, and members from underrepresented communities may be spotlighted as role models to showcase contributions to their field.

“A new suite of Infrastructure Engineer qualifications has been introduced to improve access to engineers and technicians working in the infrastructure sector who specialise in more widely defined engineering roles.”

Steve Feeley

Director Membership Recruitment
Institute of Civil Engineers

It is also common practice to ensure that **inclusive processes** are adopted relating to membership and registration, and for appointments to roles on committees and boards. This includes process reviews and

updates to be clear and transparent, and routinely offering reasonable adjustments to applicants. Some organisations have created routes that increase access to membership and registration for people from underprivileged and underserved communities, including refugees and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Specific funds, grants, or reduced membership fees, provide financial support needed to enable participation. A few commented that they offer support for people taking career breaks for parental leave or other reasons.

Meetings, conferences and events

Like membership, median results for both sectors combined for meetings, conferences and events remain at **level 2, launching**. PEIs show the greatest progress, reaching level 3.

There are pockets of action to increase diversity of speakers and attendees, and many organisations report having an action plan for this. Satisfaction feedback is sought at least informally after events. Some actions at level 3 are emerging, with many reviewing marketing materials for inclusivity, and committee chairs actively engaging to make events inclusive.

Most organisations have taken action to create a **more inclusive experience** for participants. Events are planned to be accessible (considering both physical venues and online spaces), and some organisations report considering inclusive timing for events to avoid cultural holidays and to be accessible for online attendees in other time zones. For physical events,



many ensure inclusive food options are available, and several provide quiet and multi-faith spaces at conferences.

Efforts towards **increasing representation** of speakers and attendees from diverse communities are also prevalent. Diverse line-ups of speakers are actively sought, and some organisations report interventions when this is not achieved, such as challenging organising

committees, and in some cases cancelling events.

Organisations report that they are taking a reflective approach to event planning, seeking **feedback and consultation** from speakers, attendees, and partner organisations after, and in planning for, events.



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from [This Is Engineering Image Library](#)



Education, training, and examinations

The combined sector median score for education, training and examinations, has remained at **level 2, launching**, since the 2021 benchmark.

Most organisations reported that they offer reasonable adjustments to all learners and candidates, which are put in place when needed and when reasonably possible. Some do this informally, while others have established process and guidelines for a more reliable, repeatable approach.

PEIs were more likely than science bodies to mention **guidelines and training** about EDI for trainers and assessors and those developing training programmes. Typical content is awareness of unconscious bias, and accessibility and adjustments for disability and neurodiversity.

Accreditation of education and training

Accreditation of education and training has progressed from the previous benchmarks, with the sector median reaching level 2, **launching**. Organisations have stated ambition to use accreditation as a way to encourage greater EDI in education and training providers.

The most common actions shared related to the accreditation **assessment including EDI requirements**, and providing **EDI guidelines for higher education institutions and training providers**. Five organisations commented that they require that EDI criteria must be met for accreditation to be awarded.

Prizes, awards and grants

The 2025 sector median for prizes, awards and grants has remained at **level 2, launching**. At this level, organisations have made a commitment to increase the diversity of prize award and grant applicants and nominations. Criteria and processes have been reviewed and updates made where unintentional barriers are found.

Comments described interventions to increase **inclusion in the awards criteria and processes**. Steps taken include ensuring that the judging criteria are accessible and transparent. Many anonymise applicants in the judging process to reduce bias. Effort is made to diversify judging panels, and judges may be given guidance to avoid unconscious bias in their decisions. Several organisations name prizes, awards or grants after a prominent person from an underrepresented group in their field.

Another common approach has been to introduce specific **awards for EDI accomplishments**, and to **recognise achievements of people from underrepresented groups**. Some have introduced a range of awards reflecting varied career paths and stages, and offer specific grants to of people from underserved backgrounds.



Communications and marketing

Performance in the 2025 benchmark on communications and marketing was strong, with a median **level of 3, progressing**. This is up from level 2 at the previous benchmarks. Many organisations have a plan of action to ensure positive messaging on diversity and inclusion, and regular communications about EDI topics. Many integrate EDI into the overall communications strategy, rather than treating it as a standalone concern.

The most prevalent actions relate to ensuring **EDI is incorporated in the tone, images and accessibility** of communications, publications and social media. Marketing materials are made with reference to best practices for inclusive imagery, language, tone of voice and accessibility standards. Image libraries and articles showcase diverse role models who represent the profession, for example interviews with committee members or recent award winners. These practices are often captured formally in checklists, brand guidelines, or an inclusive communications guide, which may be shared both with internal teams and externally with suppliers.

Many also commented that they run **campaigns specifically targeting or about underrepresented groups**. There may be a EDI calendar of cultural and awareness events that are promoted, such as Pride Month or Women in Engineering Day. Some campaigns directly target or focus on younger audiences and people from underrepresented communities, both as methods to raise awareness and

for providing relevant, engaging content for those communities.

“Diversity and inclusion are integral to our marketing and communication strategy. We spotlight initiatives on women in operational research, mental health, and neurodiversity, while promoting Society events and awards that broaden representation and strengthen our community's impact.”

Dr Colette Fletcher
Executive Director

The Operational Research Society

Outreach and engagement

There is no change in the 2025 benchmarking results for the median score for outreach and engagement, which remains at **level 2, launching**. Organisations typically seek to engage diverse audiences and to be inclusive in the approach they take. Many organisations also report making conscious efforts to diversify the pool of role models that represent them in campaigns and activities.

The most commented actions relate to using **inclusive and accessible resources**.



This includes ensuring diverse role models are represented in cases studies, that the language used is inclusive, and that standards of accessibility are followed.

Many organisations commented about their work to **engage schools and students**. Some have developed relationships with targeted schools to reach areas of higher need, such as schools in areas of high deprivation, and schools with high proportions of students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Employment

The median score for employment practices in the 2025 benchmarking is **level 3, progressing**, demonstrating good progress from the previous benchmarks.

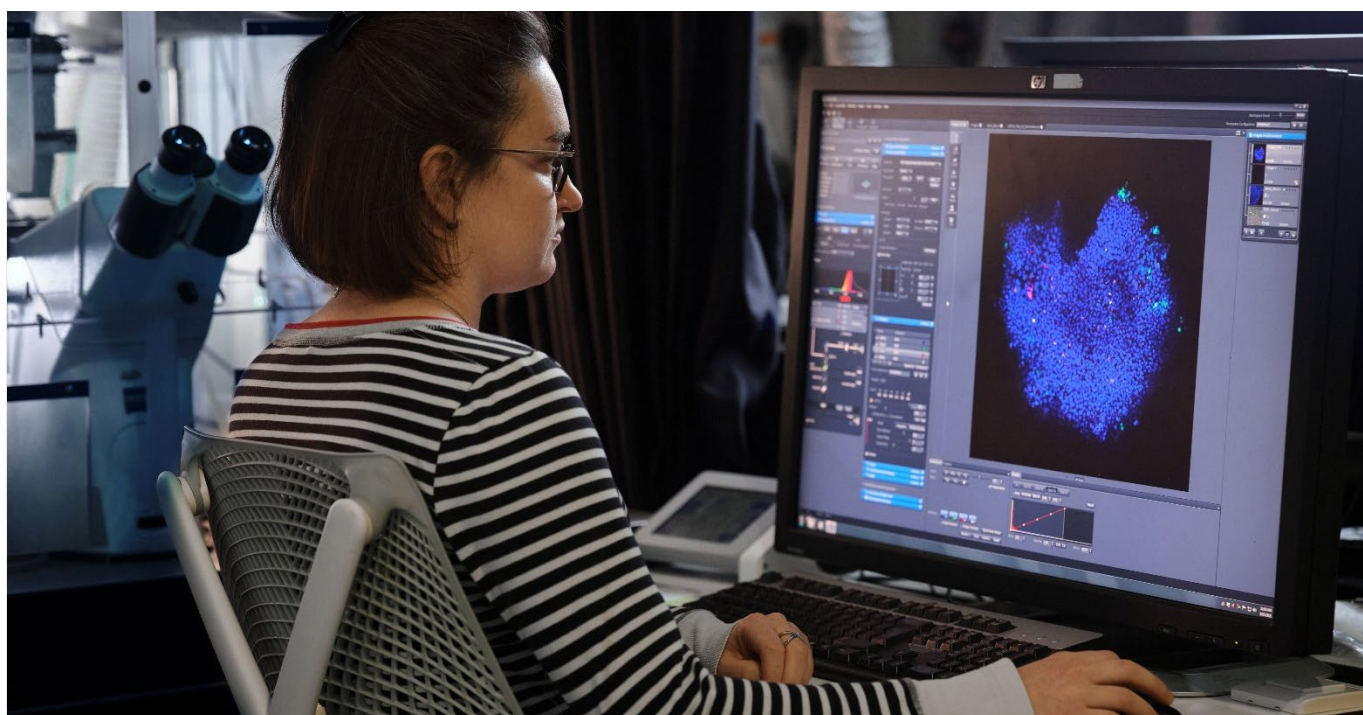
Some smaller organisations commented that as micro-businesses with few employees, some actions listed in the Progression Framework criteria were not feasible to implement. However, there was similarity across organisation sizes of the types of interventions described, with

variation only in details of what these look like in practice.

Most commented about **HR policies and procedures** that they have introduced, or updated, particularly flexible working and inclusive recruitment. Others included setting clear expectations for behaviour in the code of conduct, and policies such as bullying and harassment, transparent pay scales, leave - including maternity, paternity, compassionate and carer's leave - and menopause and wellbeing support.

About half commented about **tracking EDI data**, with age and gender the most commonly tracked demographics. Some organisations also include disability, ethnicity and other demographics. Many run engagement surveys and focus groups that include EDI questions to give insight into staff experience.

A similar number described introducing (or updating) an **EDI policy, and offering EDI guidance or training** to staff and managers.





Monitoring and measuring

The median score for monitoring and measuring remains at **level 2, launching**. Comments revealed a wide range in the extent and maturity of **data tracking** practices in place. Organisations with greater maturity routinely gather a range of quantitative and qualitative data about their governance, and regularly report EDI metrics to the board and executive leadership. Some have stated ambitions such as aiming to achieve 40% women on boards. Many organisations express ambition to develop their EDI data practices further. Several comment that new customer relationship management (CRM) software will be an enabler to achieve this.

Fourteen organisations commented about **responsibility and resources being assigned** for monitoring and measurement. Responsibility may have been assigned in a variety of ways, including to a nominated staff member, a leader, or to a EDI committee. In other organisations, each team owns and controls their own data.

Only eight organisations commented on how **data informs their goals, plans, decisions and actions**. After expanding data collection, the next most commonly identified next step was to **define key progress indicators** and relevant baselines so that progress can be monitored and assessed. This is likely to be the missing step that then enables organisations to use data to meaningfully inform decisions and action plans.

“The IET carries out regular, voluntary diversity data surveys of our colleagues, membership, and senior volunteers. To better understand the needs of our colleague base, in 2024 we carried out 30 in-depth interviews with colleagues about EDI and their wider experience at the IET. Progress in monitoring and measuring is published annually in our public EDI Year in Review.”

Laura Norton

Head of EDI & Managing Director of
WISE

**Institution of Engineering and
Technology**



Section 4

Diversity data collection and disclosure

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The heatmaps in **Figure 5** show the numbers of organisations (science bodies and PEIs combined) that report they collect diversity data, across six organisational functions, and the disclosure rates achieved on average. Disclosure rate means the percentage of the relevant group (e.g. members, employees) that share their personal information.

The functions are:

- Governance and leadership
- Membership
- Professional registration
- Education and training
- Prizes, awards and grants
- Employment.

For each function, the Progression Framework asks for information about data capture of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, transgender status, nationality, pregnancy/maternity, religion, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities and socio-economic status.

Results show that **membership diversity data collection** is a common practice, particularly for data about age and gender, but about half of the participating organisations also collect data about disability, ethnicity, nationality, religion and sexual orientation. Although disclosure rates for age and gender are strong (above 85%), they are, however low for all other characteristics (below 50%). These results indicate that there is ongoing work to do to build trust and offer incentives for members to share their sensitive personal data.

Data collection for volunteers with roles in **governance and leadership** and for **professional registration** of members is

also a common practice, with rates slightly below membership data collection. Volunteers working in governance and leadership roles have higher disclosure rates than other members (50 - 70% for the most sensitive data). While there may remain work to do to increase this further, this finding suggests that the closer engagement with these volunteers helps to encourage them to share their information.

Data collection of **employment** is also prevalent, and the strongest disclosure rates are achieved here.

Areas with the lowest rates of data collection are education and training and prizes, awards and grants.

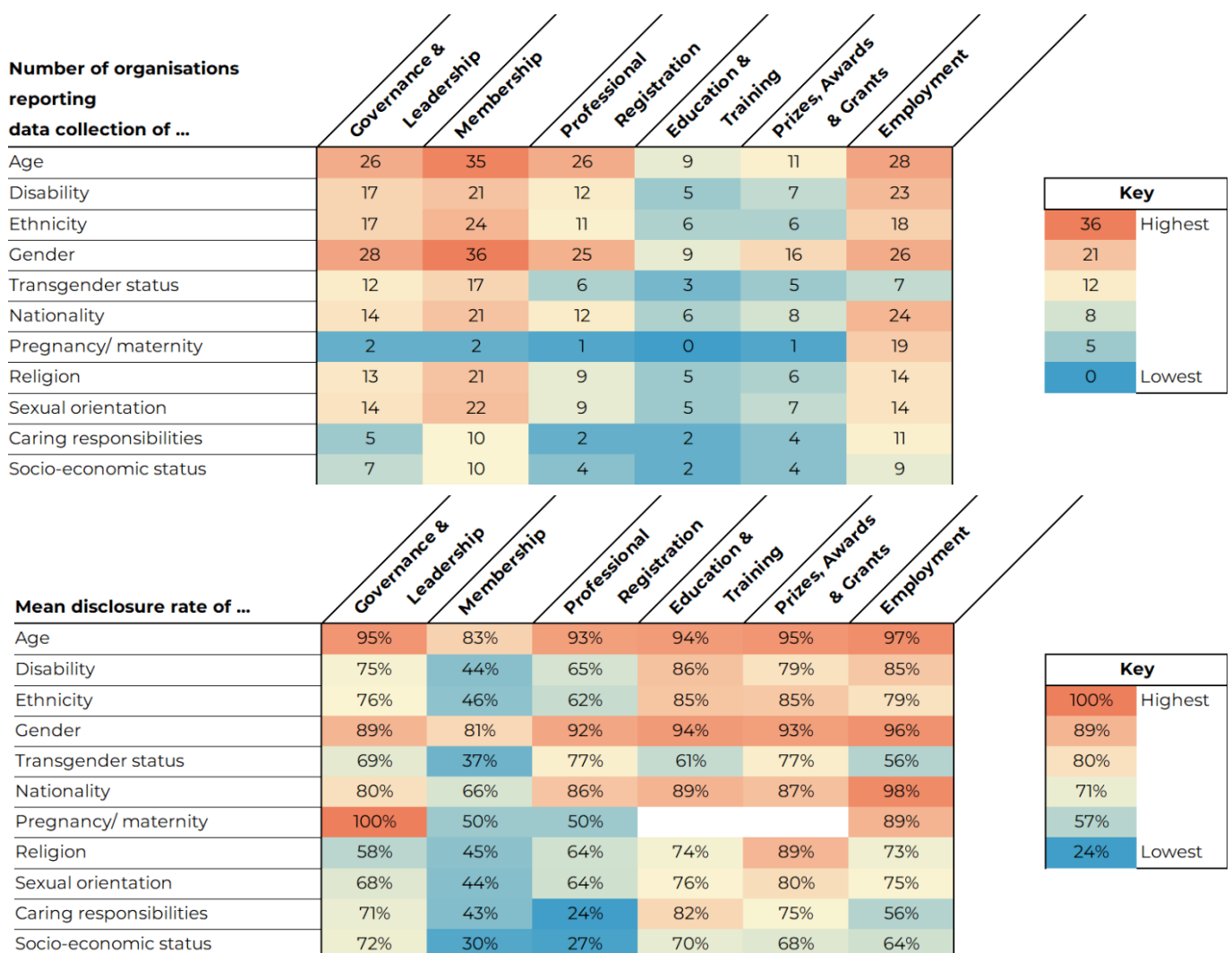


Figure 5 Heatmaps of (a) Diversity data collected and (b) mean disclosure rates achieved



Section 5

Strengths, challenges, and next steps

Part 2 of the Progression Framework asks organisations to highlight what they are most proud of, progress, challenges, and priorities for the next 12-24 months. This section draws together the common themes in their responses, and draws out insights into the effective practices observed across the sector.

Strengths

Key strengths identified by PEIs and science bodies are:

1. Governance, leadership and strategy

Across both sectors, EDI is increasingly embedded in governance and leadership structures, with visible champions at board level, formal committees, and integration into strategic plans.

2. Membership engagement

Organisations are creating special interest groups, inclusion committees, and networks to reflect and support diverse communities. Members are consulted, and their feedback informs interventions.

3. Diversity beyond gender

Beyond gender, several science bodies and PEIs have support in place for multiple groups including disability, neurodiversity, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, and socio-economic background. Some organisations design and offer intersectional support that recognises overlapping and interdependent barriers and needs.

4. Inclusive events, awards, outreach, and communications

Events, conferences and public-facing work increasingly prioritise diverse speakers, accessible formats, inclusive imagery/language, and clear codes of conduct.

5. Inclusive employment practices

Organisations emphasised building inclusive cultures internally, embedding EDI into human resources policies, training, and everyday working.

6. Improved data collection and evidence-based action

Although there remains work to be done, many report progress made towards systematic collection and monitoring of diversity data.

7. Sector influence

Through contributions to sector-wide EDI initiatives, some professional bodies are demonstrating EDI leadership and influencing the broader engineering and science ecosystem.



Challenges

1. Challenges relating to data

Difficulties in collecting, analysing, and acting on diversity data, including technical barriers with legacy IT systems, and lack of integration across platforms.

2. Limited resources and capacity

There are few staff and little time dedicated to EDI, especially in smaller organisations. Many rely heavily on their volunteers, but this can make consistent implementation of EDI difficult to achieve.

3. Cultural inertia

Organisations noted challenges in shifting traditional processes, and overcoming resistance or scepticism among members.

4. Sector-wide gaps and structural challenges

A lack of diversity in the wider science and engineering professions directly impacts membership, governance, and leadership pools. Difficulty engaging young people in STEM education creates concern about the pipeline for future talent.

5. Political climate

Organisations flagged the impact of broader political and societal changes, especially the rollback of EDI programmes in the US. These external pressures create uncertainty and can reduce confidence in EDI initiatives. Education system challenges, such as STEM teacher shortages, create challenges for engagement with underrepresented students.

Next steps

1. Strengthen data practices

Many organisations plan to expand the range of data captured, integrate data into new CRM systems, and use insights to inform strategies and measure impact.

2. Build support, guidance and training

Increased guidance and EDI training is planned to upskill staff and volunteers.

3. Embed EDI strategies

Many organisations are planning EDI action plans, often linked to broader organisational strategies for the next three to five years.

4. Improve accessibility and inclusive practices

Making physical and digital spaces more accessible, and reviewing communications, events, awards, and accreditation practices for inclusivity.

5. Governance development

Develop governance and leadership to better reflect the communities that they serve.

6. Build collaborations

Plans to collaborate more widely, such as through partnering on initiatives with other PEIs and science bodies, or building shared toolkits.



Section 6

Conclusion and recommendations

The 2025 benchmarking exercise highlights that collectively science bodies and PEIs have initiated EDI action across the Progression Framework. Strongest areas of performance are in three areas, each of which demonstrate progress since the 2021 benchmark:

- Governance and leadership
- Communications and marketing
- Employment.

The sector median has reached **level 3, progressing**, in these areas, and in meetings, conferences and events for PEIs. Performance improvements are also seen in education, training and examinations, and accreditation practices.

Most organisations now embed EDI within their governance structures, through appointing EDI representatives to committees and boards, and ensuring EDI is a regular agenda item at meetings. Many have established new groups and committees with an EDI remit.

Membership practices remain at level 2, launching, but areas of good practice are evident and many PEIs and science bodies are proud of their progress.

Communications showcase diverse members, use inclusive language and meet standards for accessibility. Volunteers and committee members receive EDI training and guidance, and some organisations report achieving more diverse membership profiles. Collecting

and monitoring data lags other areas of practice. Membership diversity data collection is common, but disclosure rates are often low. However, organisations report ambition for greater use of data to inform interventions, and most have planned next steps for tracking more comprehensive data in areas across the Framework.

As employers, science bodies and PEIs are embedding EDI into policies and practices, to build more inclusive internal cultures that support wellbeing and employee engagement.

Several organisations are role-modelling EDI leadership through external activities and collaborative projects, demonstrating sector influence across the wider engineering ecosystem.

Each PEI and science body has received a tailored report with individualised recommendations. The following recommendations bring together collective priorities for the sector, highlighting actions that can help organisations deepen their progress on EDI and strengthen their impact across science and engineering.



1. Enhance data collection, insight and transparency

Organisations should continue their efforts to establish demographic and experiential data collection across all areas of the Progression Framework. For focus and impact, begin by defining requirements and approach for the next priority action areas, rather than trying to tackle everything at once. Consider any baselines and benchmarks needed to track progress, reveal actionable insights, and measure success, and think about both lagging and leading measures. Lagging measures change indirectly as a result of an intervention (e.g. change in membership gender diversity). These can be used to measure long-term success, while leading indicators tend to be more closely linked to specific goals of an intervention (e.g. increased membership applications from early career women, following a marketing campaign).

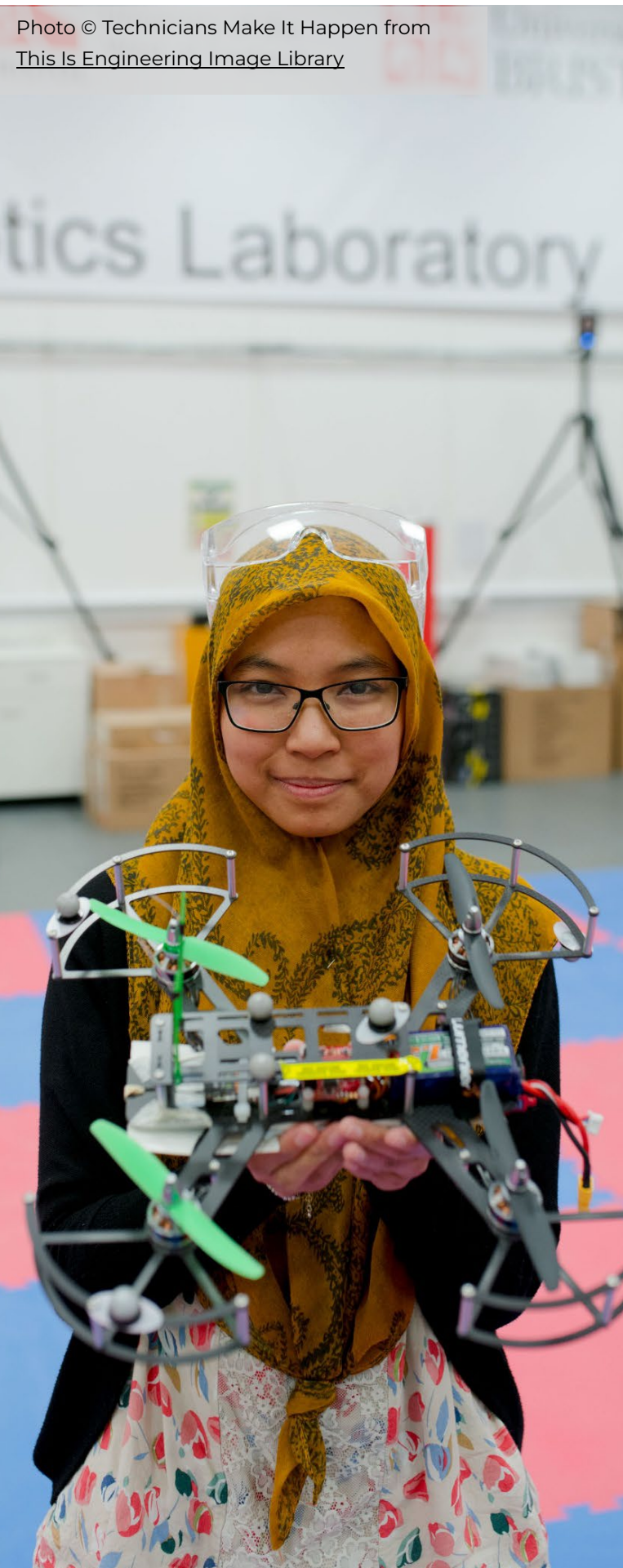
For organisations procuring new IT systems, such as CRM systems, identify system requirements early that will enable your desired approach to EDI data – changes once systems are configured are more complex and costly. Consider not only demographic data, but also qualitative data about experiences of equity and inclusion, through surveys, feedback, focus groups or interviews with diverse stakeholders.

Ensure that all requests for sensitive data clearly explain the purpose of data collection. Give information about what the data will be used for, what you aim to achieve, and how the data is protected. Share key performance indicators and





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report analysis results openly (without compromising individuals' confidentiality). Transparency is important for building trust and will help to encourage greater disclosure over time.

2. Strengthen strategy and leadership to drive structural inclusion

Many organisations create a strategic plan for EDI that aligns with organisational goals and objectives. We encourage this practice for all PEIs and science bodies. This will help to focus efforts and embed EDI into the priority areas for the business, providing direction, accountability, and a framework for impact measurement and continuous improvement of EDI activities.

The sectors should take coordinated steps to broaden the pipelines into governance and leadership roles, particularly for women, early career professionals, and other underrepresented groups. This will strengthen decision-making, and better reflect the communities served. Current leaders should role model inclusive leadership, and support structures such as mentoring, networks, and targeted development programmes to strengthen progression and retention.

Organisations with greater EDI maturity are introducing Equality Impact Assessments as a part of policy development, programme design, and strategic planning, to evaluate decisions for their effects on diverse groups. This helps identify and address potential inequalities early, ensuring fairness, respect, and inclusion are built into processes by design.



More immediate actions can include appointing named EDI leads in governance structures, and making EDI a standing agenda item in committees to ensure consistent consideration of inclusion in decision-making.

3. Expand capacity through collaborations, partnerships and volunteer engagement

Many organisations have reported positive outcomes from their strategic partnerships and collaborations. Collaborating with other science bodies and PEIs or organisations that offer specialist support for underrepresented communities can effectively expand capacity, reach and impact of EDI efforts, whether in outreach, training, events, membership and employment support, or sector influence.

For smaller organisations, working with partners may be a particularly important enabler when staff capacity is low. Some organisations comment that they have developed procurement policies to ensure alignment of external suppliers with their organisational values and EDI ambitions.

Engaging motivated volunteers through EDI committees and member branches provides a valuable way to extend capacity and drive progress on the EDI agenda across the membership.

It is important to provide consistent, role-specific training for volunteers, committees, assessors and staff that goes beyond awareness to include practical actions for equity and inclusion within the scope of their responsibilities. Guidance and induction processes can establish

clear expectations and strengthen delivery of the EDI agenda across the organisation's work and communities.

4. Foster trust and meaningful engagement

To overcome cultural inertia, resistance and scepticism among members, organisations must proactively foster trust and meaningful engagement with their membership. Trust is built when members feel represented, heard, and supported.

Cultural resistance and negative reactions to EDI messages often come from a place of distrust and concern. It can be helpful to continuously reinforce messages about equity and inclusion, alongside those about increasing diversity, to reassure and demonstrate that EDI plans will result in an improved experience for every member.

Clearly explain the purpose of EDI initiatives, how data will be used, and how equity benefits all members.

Communicate progress openly and engage sceptics with constructive dialogue. Consult membership widely for feedback and inputs on EDI plans, and consider the full membership journey, from sharing information in onboarding, through to professional development, mentoring programmes and career support offered.

5. Ensure accessibility and inclusion as core foundations

Accessibility and greater support enables full participation for all, be it across physical venues, digital systems, or communications strategies. Many PEIs and



science bodies emphasised inclusive language, imagery, accessibility of websites and events, and proactive campaigns. This highlights communications as a near-term lever for visible impact. Professional bodies should ensure inclusive and accessible communications and imagery become standard practice.

EDI should feature visibly both as a topic in its own right and as a lens applied to all internal and external engagement, shaping how the organisation presents itself to members, the sector, future professionals and society.

6. Nurture an intersectional approach

An intersectional approach considers how multiple, overlapping identities shape

experiences. It requires organisations to seek feedback, reflect on lived experience, and design policies, practices, and support that address interconnected barriers and needs.

Many organisations now have support in place for multiple diversity groups including disability, neurodiversity, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, and socio-economic background.

To build on this, organisations need to move beyond headline demographics to capture more nuanced, intersectional data and to regularly listen to members' and staff experiences through surveys, focus groups, or qualitative research. This approach recognises that barriers are not experienced in isolation, and timely EDI interventions need to reflect messy, real-world complexity.





7. Strengthen sector leadership in a changing environment

Sector leadership is essential to secure the future talent pipeline and ensure science and engineering continue to inform government policy. PEIs and science bodies are well positioned to show how EDI helps meet current and future workforce needs, while providing a collective voice to shape national priorities.

The 2021 benchmarking report recommended creating a community of practice, and we reiterate this recommendation. Organisations should use such a forum to regularly exchange resources and insight to amplify good practice and support collective progress. This can particularly benefit small organisations, while supporting science bodies and PEIs of all sizes.

Given the increased scrutiny and resistance to EDI in the current geopolitical climate, organisations should consider how their programmes may need to evolve to sustain effective leadership on EDI. Internally, this may include communications to reaffirm values and create a supportive, psychologically safe environment for staff and colleagues affected by political changes.

Externally, organisations may need to adapt approaches to reinforce their impact and continue shaping and role-modelling good practice in the sector.

A community of practice can provide a collective voice for EDI, enable shared navigation of external pressures, and sustain visible leadership across the sector.



About Inclusioneering™

This report was prepared by Inclusioneering Limited for the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Science Council.



About Inclusioneering™

Inclusioneering Limited (registered number 13143525) is a UK-based Inclusive Innovation consultancy dedicated to ensuring that technology is developed by and benefits every member of our diverse society. Our mission is to advance humanity towards a more prosperous and fair future.

At Inclusioneering™, we equip innovative technology and engineering organisations to deliver equitable, fair, and trusted solutions to the world's grand challenges. Our data- and evidence-based approaches combine both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to foster diverse, equitable, and inclusive cultures with focus and impact. Integrally connected with the innovation process, we enable organisations to embed inclusion at every stage of product and service development, ensuring that technological advancement is both responsible and equitable.

Our work is grounded in the latest research in organisational psychology and industry best practices. Leveraging unique insights from the extensive research and experience of the Inclusioneering™ team, we ensure that our clients achieve measurable and impactful change, leading to equitable outcomes by design of their products and services.

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