

## Tip sheet: Five tips for building a positive research culture

Research leaders have a responsibility to create inclusive and safe environments where the quality and integrity of research and innovation is not compromised. Research benefits from involving people from outside the research community in a process of shared learning and discovery. This may happen in a variety of ways – co-production, collaboration or participant and public involvement.

Starting points for you to be aware of or consider as a new research leader are:

### 1. Citizenship: understanding the influence you have to help and support others

- Foster collaboration not competition
- Consider how you can provide a voice and opportunities to colleagues from minority groups
- Create opportunities to talk in meetings about topics other than work
- Build in time to enable your staff to feedback as to how they find the team is operating and be open to contributions and suggestions for change

### 2. Legislation: important parts of the UK system that are relevant to equality, diversity and inclusion

- [The Equality Act 2010](#) sets out 9 protected characteristics that form the framework for understanding risks of discrimination in the workplace
- The landscape of equality legislation in the UK is dynamic, minoritized groups may be dealing with reforms and updates to legislation all the time which may feel distant from the everyday work of running a team but are hugely relevant to individuals in your team and how they live their lives

### 3. Inclusive research design

- A diversity of people, ideas and knowledge enables a healthier culture, which in turn can result in research and innovation that has the widest benefit. When research and innovation is truly reflective of the diversity of the population as a whole, the credibility and relevance of that research and innovation is enhanced for all.
- This applies across the whole lifespan of the research environment
  - i. Project plan
  - ii. Data acquisition
  - iii. Creating a diverse team: inclusive recruitment practices and equitable approaches to retention and promotion
  - iv. Public engagement
  - v. Output dissemination, [including inclusive approaches to credit on publications](#) and [awareness of the Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#)
- Three resources that will help you to get started:
  - i. [UKRI resources on inclusive research design](#)
  - ii. [Joint FLF-UKRI blog on inclusive research design](#)
  - iii. [Overview of inclusive recruitment for research participants](#)

### 4. Embrace learning opportunities

- Actively seek out and engage with training designed to improve your understanding of others: attend the [training offered by the College's EDI team](#)
- You might also consider attending some of [Advance HE's EDI workshops](#).
- This might be things like disability awareness, how to be an LGBT+ ally, active bystander training, mental health awareness, general active listening skills or how to have difficult conversations
- Connect with Imperial College London's [local staff equality networks](#), or they may share or produce training opportunities
- Follow Twitter accounts to learn more:
  - i. @ladders4action
  - ii. @tigerinstem
  - iii. @edisgroup

- iv. @DI\_leaders
- v. @The\_CoPOWer
- vi. @The1752Group
- A leader that is open to identifying areas of improvement sets a clear example to their team that they are open to developing and receiving new information

## 5. Community responsibility: understanding the impact you have on others

### *Code of conduct*

Have you considered creating a code of conduct for your team? This can be a tailored document that provides a shared set of codes that all members of the team are committing to when they come to work. It can be created collaboratively with input from your team and also be open to change as new members join. This idea is based on [conference code of conduct guidance](#), but we suggest you consider how it could apply in your immediate team setting. You could use the [example research group charter](#) from the Scientists Toolbox as a template to get started.

Suggested (general) codes/principles for your research team:

- All members of our team are dedicated to ensuring we work together in a collegiate and supportive manner
- We will respect cultural differences and embrace opportunities to learn more about each other
- We do not tolerate harassment and bullying

If you wanted to consider sending a strong message of allyship and support to those from marginalised identities you could specifically declare things like :

- we are an anti-racist space
- we welcome and recognise all gender identities
- we are committed to challenging ableism
- we are LGB+ allies

This level of commitment ought to be well-informed and ensure you are prepared to be challenged on these matters should they arise. Training is recommended to ensure you and your team are resourced to understand a variety of equality issues.

### *Negative impact:*

Do you have a clear process for addressing actions that have a negative impact? Ultimately this is about addressing bullying and harassment. Consult The College's guidance e.g. [Bullying & Harassment](#) and [Resolution policies](#), for this. Your employees may also be union members and seek support through those routes too. Familiarity with navigating these processes can be variable and there is often a steer towards 'informal' resolution as the first option. It is important that leaders are empowered to call-out and address bullying and harassment. Sign up for the College's [Active Bystander training](#) and familiarise yourself with the [5Ds of active bystander intervention](#).