University of Nottingham
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Postgraduate Research

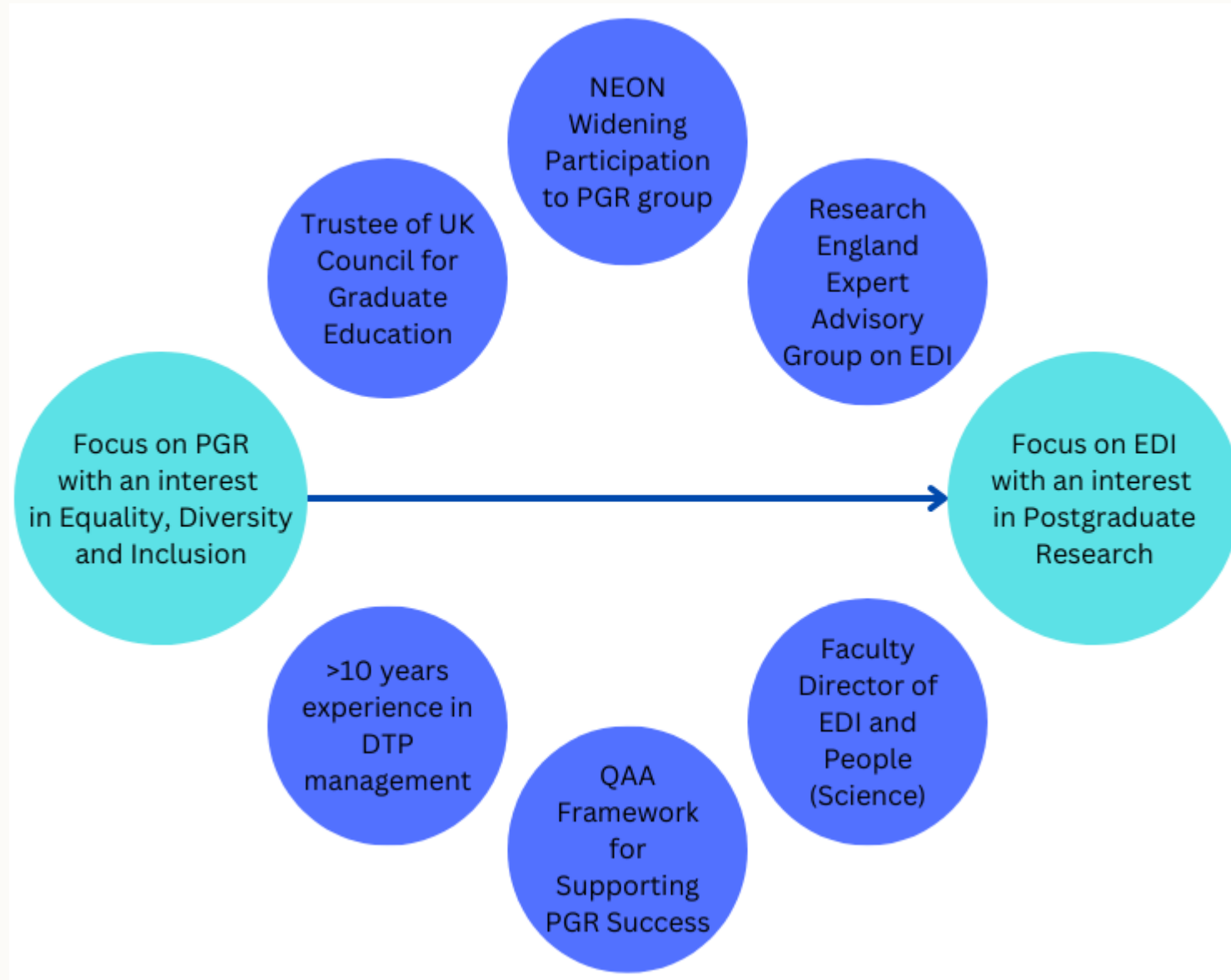Why it matters and what we can do

Rachel Van Krimpen

Today

- Introductions

- A brief history of EDI in PGR

- What are the EDI challenges in PGR?

- How is the sector addressing those challenges?

- What have we achieved so far?

- What's next in this space?

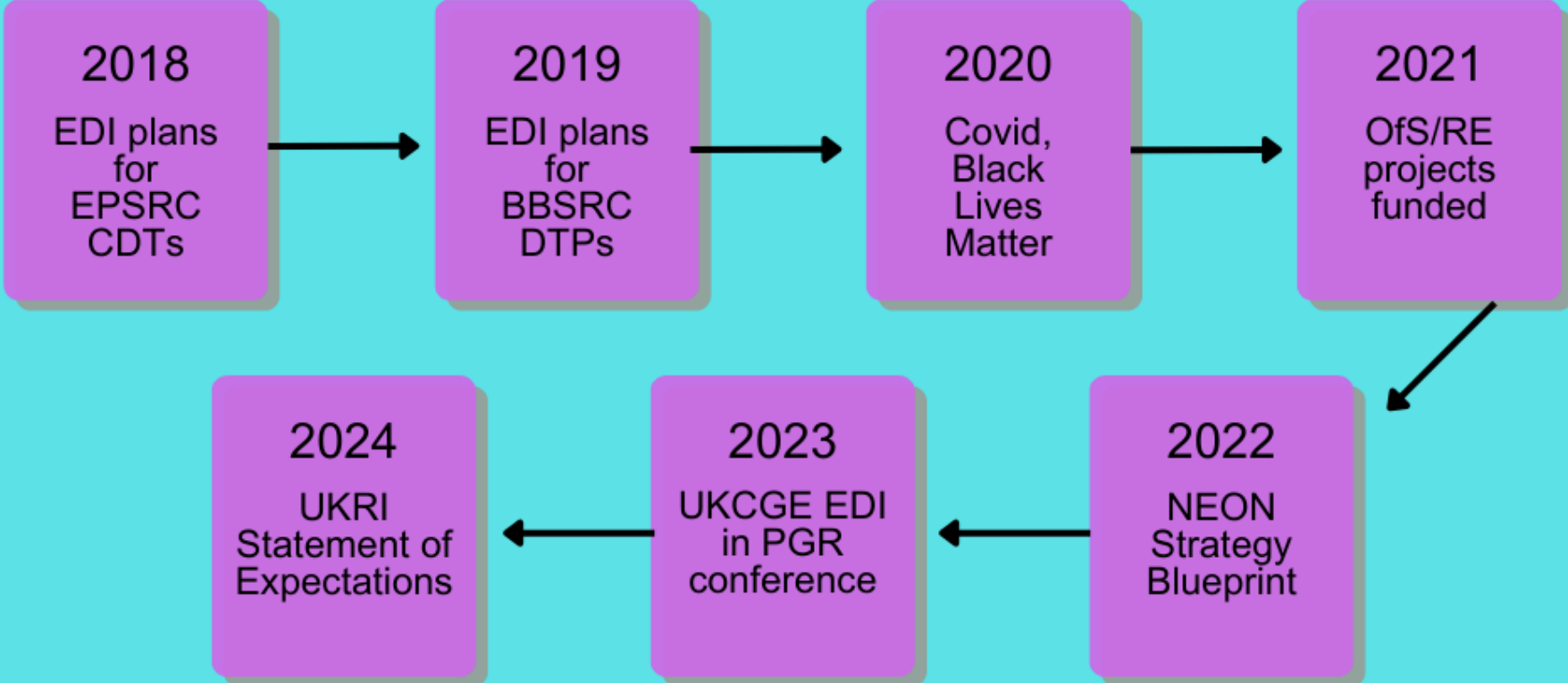- What is the role of the supervisor in all this?

Where I'm coming from...

A Brief History
EDI in PGR

2018 — EDI plans for EPSRC CDTs →
2019 — EDI plans for BBSRC DTPs →
2020 — Covid, Black Lives Matter →
2021 — OfS/RE projects funded

2024 — UKRI Statement of Expectations ←
2023 — UKCGE EDI in PGR conference ←
2022 — NEON Strategy Blueprint

What are the EDI challenges in PGR?

- Crucial point in the academic pipeline

> **"over a three-year period just 1.2% of the 19,868 studentships awarded by all UKRI research councils went to Black or Black Mixed students and only 30 of those were from Black Caribbean background"**
> - Leading Routes, 2019

- Data challenges
- Drivers for change
- Complexity of the funding landscape

- UG-focused support services
- The 'hidden curriculum' of postgraduate research
- "Staying in your lane" (Wakeling)

"Staying in your lane"

Table 3. Type of higher education institution of first-degree by whether first-degree graduates immediately transitioned to a life sciences postgraduate research degree.

HEI Type	Not in PGR		PGR		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Oxbridge	21,790	1.48	430	8.28	22,220	1.51
Other Golden Triangle	29,670	2.02	235	4.54	29,905	2.03
Other Russell Group	332,835	22.67	2,335	44.71	335,165	22.75
Non-RG pre-1992	340,960	23.23	1,245	23.88	342,205	23.23
Post-1992	742,645	50.59	970	18.58	743,615	50.48
Total	1,467,895	100.00	5,220	100.00	1,473,110	100.00

Source: HESA data

Diaz Lopes and Wakeling, 2022

What are we doing about it?

- Cross-sector action
- OfS/Research England projects
  - E.g. Yorkshire Consortium for Equity in Doctoral Education
  - E.g. Equity in Doctoral Education through Partnership and Innovation
- Development of resources
- Increasing funder expectations
- Programme-level interventions – e.g. WP summer schools, applicant mentoring programmes, guaranteed interview schemes, ringfencing funded places

What have we achieved so far?

- Collective will and determination
- EDI plans a core element of funded PhD programmes
- A growing understanding of 'what works'

Case Study: Nottingham BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnership

- From 2012 to 2019 **<6%** of students recruited to the programme were from racially minoritised backgrounds
- Through inclusive marketing, applicant mentoring and a guaranteed interview scheme, from 2020-2023, **18.1%** of home students recruited were from racially minoritised backgrounds

What's next in this space?

- Continued focus on diversification of recruitment to PGR
- How do we support the success of increasingly diverse cohorts of PhD students?

Researcher Academy

Postgraduate Researchers from Diverse Backgrounds: A Framework for Defining, Measuring and Supporting Success

QAA

The role of supervisors

Decision makers

Supporters

Mentors

Advocates

Sponsors

References

The Broken Pipeline Report: https://leadingroutes.org/mdocs-posts/the-broken-pipeline-barriers-to-black-students-accessing-research-council-funding

Inequality in early career research in the UK life sciences: https://www.ukri.org/publications/inequality-in-early-career-research-in-the-uk-life-sciences/

NEON Widening Participation to Postgraduate Study working group: https://www.educationopportunities.co.uk/programmes/working-groups/wp-in-students-post-graduate-study/

References

YCEDE: https://ycede.ac.uk/

EDEPI: https://www.ntu.ac.uk/c/equity-in-doctoral-education-through-partnership-and-innovation

University of Nottingham EDI in PGR resources:

1. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/edi/documents/researcher-academy-supervising-postgraduate-researchers-from-diverse-backgrounds.pdf

2. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/edi/documents/uon-edi-pgr-recruitment-guide-accesspdf.pdf

3. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/edi/documents/uon-researcheracademy-pgr-successproject.pdf

Thank you