Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

In the Centre for Postdoctoral Development in Infrastructure, Cities and Energy (C-DICE), we believe that only an inclusive and diverse community can fully address the challenging and complex problems posed by sustaining low energy, net zero-carbon infrastructure and cities. C-DICE is committed to supporting the construction of such a diverse and inclusive research environment in which all postdoctoral researchers feel valued, respected, and engaged.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are integral to our definition of excellence and will be embedded in C-DICE activities, strands (development, training, problem-led sandpit series and impact), recruitment, research, as well as postdoctoral experience.

Each of the participating HEIs is committed to the Athena SWAN Charter at a minimum level of bronze, with the majority of partners being Stonewall Diversity Champions, Members of the Race Equality Charter, signed up to Disability Confident scheme and to the Time to Change Employer Pledge.

1. Development strand

Recruitment EDI considerations: EDI considerations will be central to the application and selection procedures in order to ensure that C-DICE establishes a diverse pipeline of talent and guarantees equal opportunities. Diversity will be considered when recruiting for development opportunities and composing interview panels. Job adverts will avoid jargon and clearly demarcate 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria. A blind recruitment process for the selection of candidates will be used when selecting candidates by omitting personal information from CVs. We recognise that the interview process is not a test for 'social competence', and we will use combination of traditional interview process with the review of the candidates' work when assessing the candidates, to facilitate the application process for neurodiverse candidates.

Industry Partner engagement and outreach: EDI processes will be followed in activities relating to the postdoctoral researchers' engagement with industry. C-DICE will collaborate with industry partners to improve the integration of postdoctoral researchers during their placements and secondments and to enhance an inclusive working environment.

2. Training strand

Ensuring that all postdoctoral researchers can access appropriate training opportunities is a priority for C-DICE. Fostering a workplace that focuses on inclusion is the best to attract diverse talent while retaining and nurturing that talent. For us, inclusion relies on a positive culture and environment and on the provision of continuous training and career support to all C-DICE postdoctoral researchers considering their personal and professional circumstances. Postdoctoral researchers will be able to select CPD opportunities, specialised training and to access existing world-class facilities hosted by ERA and UKCRIC HEIs to suit their professional and project needs.

3. Sandpits strand

The EDI strategy will also inform the recruitment of participants in the Sandpit events with the goal to attract diverse talent and coalesce interdisciplinary teams around solving complex, industry-driven and co-created research challenges through the development of collaborative work and team working skills. A merit-based selection of the most innovative research ideas will guide the allocation of competitive fellowships and grants, and one grand challenge. Throughout the whole process, postdoctoral researchers will have structured and rigorous support and equal access to every suitable opportunity and fellowship available.

The EDI strategy will ensure the creation of new opportunities for postdoctoral researchers with protected characteristics in industry, increase communication between stakeholder groups and improve networks. At least one Sandpit virtual event will be organised to accommodate the needs of participants that might benefit from this remote format (e.g., carers and/or parents).

4. Impact strand

The impact strand will promote EDI good practice, enhance knowledge and understanding of EDI in the sector, and work as a blueprint for research programmes in HEIs. The EDI strategy will be reflected in a series of activities, showcase events and annual conferences to ensure widespread dissemination of research outputs.

C-DICE is committed to making both virtual and in-person events accessible and inclusive by considering areas such as time, length, location and building access, adjustments for certain delegates, marketing materials and programme development. We also plan to share good practice with contributors and presenters regarding the accessibility of slides and presentations to ensure they are available to a wider range of audiences.

C-DICE aims to ensure that a variety of speakers and postdoctoral researchers with protected characteristics are invited to contribute to events, share their new ideas and provide feedback via focus groups for instance. C-DICE events will encourage participation and inclusivity and aim to improve the employability of all postdoctoral researchers, but also pay special attention to the under-represented groups in the sector.

EDI Training

C-DICE staff members and stakeholders will champion application of EDI principles and practices in C-DICE. The project team will receive mandatory EDI and Unconscious Bias training, while C-DICE Fellows and Associates will be strongly encouraged to do so as part of their development. The ultimate goal is to enhance the collective awareness of EDI for everyone involved in the decision-making process in C-DICE so as to improve the experience of postdoctoral researchers from under-represented groups.

Strategies, policies and processes

Flexible working: Procedures are in place to accommodate requests or promote flexible working and meet the needs and personal circumstances of postdoctoral researchers. C-DICE seeks to learn the best practice within the different institutions in this collaborative effort and amend processes accordingly. The Centre will be responsive to the needs of carers and parents by ensuring that meeting and activity times, including for online training sessions, enable the participation of people with caring responsibilities.

Virtual events and meetings:

EDI funding: A dedicated EDI fund will cover additional costs incurred related to EDI issues such as the cost of caring for dependents, or for dependents/carers to accompany participants on courses.

Celebrating diversity: Key Religious and Awareness Days will be used as a guidance when scheduling sandpits, training sessions and other key events, identifying deadlines for secondment and placement applications. The Centre will also carefully consider requests for flexibility on the grounds of religion or belief. C-DICE will also promote activities related to a variety of Awareness Dates and initiatives.

Monitoring and reporting

Representatives of collaborating universities will co-create Key Performance Indicators in conjunction with the Universities' staff support groups to contribute to future improvements of the strategy and practices across the HEIs. EDI will be overseen by the C-DICE Director and Project Manager through the collection and monitoring of participation of those from all protected characteristic groups and by conducting an equality impact assessment on available opportunities. Participation in C-DICE activities will be monitored and evaluated for inclusivity. The development of research skills for industry will be determined through regular interactions with the industrial steering/advisory groups within UKCRIC and ERA, and the C-DICE stakeholder engagement group. The EDI strategy will be regularly updated based on feedback from postdoctoral researchers and on collected EDI data regarding participation.