

DEVELOPING AND LAUNCHING A NETWORK

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Yorkshire Consortium for
Equity in Doctoral Education





YCEDE TOOLKIT

Yorkshire Consortium for Equity in
Doctoral Education



Collaborating across five Yorkshire universities,
YCEDE is dedicated to widening access to
postgraduate research for people of colour.

YCEDE has produced the Toolkit for Equity in Doctoral
Education to freely share our resources and learnings
with the aim of inspiring and accelerating change.
Some of the resources are aimed at PGR applicants
and current PGRs, others are for staff involved in
recruiting and supporting PGRs, or creating an anti-
racist research culture.

<https://ycede.ac.uk/toolkit/>

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YCEDE will be adding more materials over the course of 2025/26. Please email info@ycede.ac.uk if you have any comments or questions for the team.

Applicants, Students, and PGRs

Resources for: Current undergraduate/PGT students, prospective PGR applicants, current PGR students

[Read More](#)

Staff

Resources for: Academic staff, supervisors, staff involved in PGR recruitment & selection, project managers & professional services staff, university leadership.

[Read More](#)



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Implementing Equitable PGR Recruitment and Admissions Practices in Schools & Departments

This document outlines the constraints and enablers to improving equity in doctoral admissions, as well as suggesting potential initiatives to address these challenges. There is a separate document available for CDTs/DTPs.

Produced by: Prof Paul Wakeling & Dr Bukola Oyinloye (University of York)
September 2024

YCEDE cannot guarantee that all information contained in this resource is accurate at the time of reading, particularly with regard to dates, deadlines, and funding availability.

Suggested Audience: Staff
Suggested Sub-Audience: PGR Recruitment & Selection

This resource is intended for use in improving equity and outcomes for ethnically minoritised individuals interested in doctoral study or careers in research.
This resource was produced by the staff named above on behalf of the YCEDE project. Please ensure appropriate credits are clearly included in any external use of this resource.

TO CITE THIS
Wakeling, P. & Oyinloye, B. (2024) Yorkshire Consortium for Equity in Doctoral Education [online] available at: [Constraints, Initiatives, and Enablers in Doctoral Applications and Selection: Briefing note for schools and departments - Yorkshire Consortium for Equity in Doctoral Education](#)

AIMS OF THE NETWORK

Providing a platform for researchers from diverse backgrounds means recognising and actively addressing the following issues:

- **Underrepresentation:** Many research fields have a significantly lower proportion of researchers from certain groups than their proportion in the general population. This can lead to research agendas, perspectives and focuses that don't reflect the experiences of everyone in society.
- **Systemic Barriers:** Institutional biases, lack of mentorship, limited funding access, unfair evaluations, and exclusive cultural environments can hinder the careers of researchers from marginalised backgrounds.
- **Value of Diversity:** Researchers with diverse lived experiences bring innovative ideas, culturally sensitive methodologies and can often better understand and serve diverse communities, enhancing research quality and impact.
- **Equity and Justice:** Diversity in research is vital for achieving equity and justice in academia. It can help to address structural inequalities and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to advance knowledge.

Establishing the LinkedIn Inclusive Research Network, with a greater emphasis on the diversity of researchers, focuses on **supporting, connecting, and elevating** researchers from diverse backgrounds, providing them with a platform to **share experiences, overcome challenges, seek collaboration, and drive change.**



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STEPS FOR DEVELOPING AND LAUNCHING A NETWORK



Based on experiences of
setting up the YCEDE
Inclusive Research Network



<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14054108/>

1) DEFINE YOUR NETWORK'S CLEAR FOCUS AND GOALS

- **What are the primary goals for the network?** (e.g. providing a platform for networking and collaboration among underrepresented researchers, sharing funding and career opportunities for diverse scholars, discussing challenges and solutions for diversity in research, promoting the work of researchers from marginalised groups, fostering mentorship connections).
- **What makes this network unique?** How will it specifically cater to the needs and experiences of researchers from diverse backgrounds beyond a general inclusive research group?
- **How will you come up with a name?** Seek input from members of the network, so that people have some ownership of the network.



2) IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Our primary audience is **researchers from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds** across **various disciplines and career stages**. However, this also includes **allies** who are **committed to supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion**.



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3) DEVELOP A CONTENT STRATEGY



- **Highlighting research by diverse researchers:** Share their work and achievements.
- **Discussing topics relevant to diverse researchers' experiences:** E.g. navigating bias in academia, securing funding as an underrepresented scholar, culturally responsive research practices, and work-life balance.
- **Sharing opportunities:** Post information about grants, fellowships, job openings, and conferences specifically aimed at or welcoming to diverse researchers.
- **Facilitating discussions:** Ask questions and start conversations about current issues in inclusive research and diversity in academia, and encourage members to share their experiences.
- **Featuring resources:** Share articles, reports, toolkits, and other resources related to inclusive research and supporting diverse researchers.
- **Promoting events:** Share information about relevant upcoming webinars, workshops, and events.
- **Member spotlights:** Periodically feature members to highlight their work and contributions.



4) PLAN YOUR LAUNCH

In planning stages of the network we did the following:

- **Invited relevant LinkedIn connections:** Personally invite individuals who fit the target demographic or are allies.
- **Reached out to relevant organisations and networks:** Contact universities, research institutions, professional associations, and diversity and inclusion organisations that work with researchers. Ask them to share the group with their members.
- **Promoted the group on other platforms:** Share the group link via other social media, email signatures, academic websites, and in relevant newsletters.
- **Launched the network virtually:** Host a webinar or online discussion related to the group's theme to generate initial interest and membership.



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5) ENGAGE MEMBERS AND FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY



- **Be an active administrator/moderator:** Welcome new members, respond to comments and questions promptly, and participate in discussions yourself.
- **Encourage member participation:** Ask questions, run polls, and acknowledge contributions.
- **Facilitate introductions:** Encourage new members to introduce themselves and their research interests.
- **Create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere:** Ensure all members feel safe and respected to share their thoughts and experiences. Address any disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour swiftly and according to your group rules.
- **Highlight member achievements:** Celebrate successes and milestones of group members.



6) DEVELOP A ROBUST MODERATION POLICY

Clear and consistent moderation is essential for a positive and inclusive environment.

- **Clearly state prohibited content and behaviour** in the group rules (e.g., spam, self-promotion outside of designated threads, disrespectful language, personal attacks, and discriminatory comments).
- **Outline the consequences of violating rules** (e.g., warning, temporary suspension, permanent removal).
- **Be consistent in enforcing rules.**
- **Consider having a diverse moderation team** that understands the nuances of inclusive language and potential micro-aggressions.
- **Provide a clear way for members to report** inappropriate content or behaviour.



7) STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- **Maintain a consistent posting schedule:** Regularly share new content and initiate discussions.
- **Encourage member-led initiatives:** Empower members to start their own discussions, share resources, or even organise small group activities within the network.
- **Solicit feedback from members:** Regularly ask for input on how to improve the group and make it more valuable to them.
- **Monitor group analytics:** Pay attention to membership growth, engagement levels, and popular topics to understand what is working and what can be improved.
- **Adapt and evolve:** Be willing to adjust your content strategy and group activities based on member feedback and the evolving landscape of inclusive research and diversity in academia.
- **Consider forming a small, dedicated team** to help manage the group, share moderation duties, and brainstorm new ideas.



CONCLUSION



By focusing on creating a welcoming and valuable space specifically for researchers from diverse backgrounds and their allies, and by actively managing and nurturing the community, you can establish and sustain an impactful network for members.



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THANK YOU



For the full resource, click the
link below!

VISIT US

<https://ycede.ac.uk/toolkit/developing-and-launching-a-network/>

Find more resources in our Toolkit
on our website!

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