

Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) Consortium Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2025-2027)

Informed by, Disabled and Neurodivergent, Global Majority International, Parent/Carers and Working-Class CDP Doctoral Researcher Focus Groups

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Glossary

Award Holders - Institutions (not individuals) who have been granted a block allocation of funded doctoral studentships by AHRC through the CDP scheme. These organisations (such as museums, galleries, archives, libraries, or heritage bodies) are responsible for:

- Managing and administering the studentships
- Coordinating recruitment and support for CDP doctoral researchers
- Ensuring compliance with AHRC framework, reporting, and governance
- Collaborating with university partners to deliver high-quality doctoral training

Equality – Within the CDP Consortium, equality means ensuring that all doctoral researchers, supervisors, and partner institutions have fair access to opportunities, resources, and recognition, regardless of protected characteristics or background. Equality in this context includes adapting processes, such as recruitment, training, and funding allocation managed by the CDP Consortium, to remove barriers and address systemic disadvantages.

Equity – Equity is about recognising that not everyone starts from the same place and taking steps to address historical and structural inequalities. In the CDP Consortium context, equity involves providing targeted resources, adjustments, and support to ensure that all doctoral researchers can thrive, particularly those from underrepresented groups.

Diversity – Diversity in the CDP Consortium setting refers to valuing and encouraging a range of perspectives, experiences, and identities across our researcher community, supervisors, and organisational partners. Celebrating diversity enhances research quality, strengthens collaboration, and fosters richer engagement with the heritage sector and wider public.

Inclusion – Inclusion for the CDP Consortium means creating an environment where every doctoral researcher and partner feels welcomed, respected, and empowered to contribute. This includes designing accessible events, embedding inclusive supervision practices, and ensuring representation from under-represented groups in governance and decision-making.

Intersectionality – Intersectionality is the understanding that individuals may experience overlapping forms of discrimination or disadvantage due to the interconnected nature of social categories such as race, gender, disability, sexuality, and social class background. For the CDP, this means recognising how these intersections shape doctoral researchers' experiences and ensuring policies and support mechanisms respond holistically.

Neurodivergence – Neurodivergence describes natural variations in brain function and cognitive processing, including but not limited to autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and Tourette’s syndrome. The CDP Consortium values neurodivergent perspectives as vital to innovation and creativity, and commits to creating environments, processes, and training that enable full participation.

Structural Discrimination – Structural discrimination refers to systemic disadvantage embedded within institutional policies, practices, and cultures, which can disproportionately affect underrepresented groups. The CDP consortium acknowledges that such barriers do exist within both heritage and academic sectors and works actively to dismantle them through equitable policies and inclusive practice.

Equality Act (2010) – The Equality Act came into force in October 2010, combining over 116 pieces of legislation into one single Act. It provides the legal framework to protect individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and to promote equal opportunities for all. It simplifies, strengthens, and harmonises discrimination law to protect individuals from unfair treatment and advance equality. It identifies nine ‘protected characteristics:

Age – Belonging to a particular age or age range; protection applies regardless of being young or old.

Disability – Having a physical, mental, sensory, or learning impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on day-to-day activities.

Gender Reassignment – The process of transitioning from one gender to another; includes gender identity.

Marriage and Civil Partnership – Legal recognition of relationships between both opposite-sex and same-sex partners.

Pregnancy and Maternity – Protection during pregnancy and up to 26 weeks after birth, including breastfeeding.

Race – Includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief – Religious or philosophical beliefs, or lack of belief, that influence life choices.

Sex – Being male or female; includes protection against sex-based discrimination.

Sexual Orientation – Sexual attraction towards the same sex, opposite sex, or both.

Social Class

Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) – Section 149 of the Equality Act requires public bodies, and those operating under its principles, to: (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (2) advance equality of opportunity; and (3) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The duty also includes publishing annual equality information and setting equality objectives at least every four years.

Human Rights Act (1998) – This Act, in force since October 2000, safeguards fundamental human rights in the UK. For the CDP Consortium, it ensures that research activities, placements, and events protect participants' dignity, safety, and freedoms, and avoid inhumane or degrading treatment.

Accessibility Statement

We want to ensure that the information we communicate is fair and accessible to all sections of our communities. Doctoral Researchers, potential researchers, all staff within the CDP Consortium, and the public can request reasonable adjustments such as information converted into other formats for easier reading.

To request information or any of our key documents in an alternative format such as braille, larger print, audio, or other format, please email quoting your email address and telephone number along with the title of the publication, plus the format you require. Our website also displays some of our key documents in Easy Read format

In addition, if you may require additional support e.g., a British Sign Language interpreter to support you or you may need language support where your first spoken language is not English, and are unable to email, please contact the CDP mobile (07350450816).

For more information, please contact us on cdp@vam.ac.uk or you have the option to use Next Generation Text, if you cannot hear or speak on the phone. You can also contact us by email: cdp@vam.ac.uk

You can also access our website using the following link to get in touch: [Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships · V&A](#)

Foreword & Vision

The Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) Consortium is a UK-wide network of cultural and heritage organisations and higher education institutions working in partnership to deliver innovative, interdisciplinary doctoral training. Our stakeholders include doctoral researchers, academic supervisors, heritage professionals, partner universities, cultural and heritage organisations, the CDP Consortium Coordination team, sector funders such as the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), who are funding both the doctoral researchers supported through the CDP Scheme and the CDP Coordination team, and community and advocacy groups whose expertise and lived experience inform our approach to research and training. Each stakeholder group plays a vital role in shaping the doctoral researcher experience, influencing governance, contributing to knowledge exchange, and ensuring our work has both academic and public impact.

The CDP scheme launched in 2012 and has now completed four funding rounds. The first cohort of studentships began in 2013 (CDP1). The second round (CDP2) commenced in 2016 and supported four annual allocations of studentships. The third round awarded funding to 14 award holders, initially planned for three annual allocations, but later extended to four years in response to the COVID-19 pandemic¹. The fourth round of awards (CDP4) launched in 2024 and recruitment will take place annually in 2024, 2025, and 2026. Approximately 50 studentships per year are supported through the scheme.

AHRC does not participate in the assessment or selection of individual students. Studentship projects are advertised and recruited by higher education institution (HEI) partners and CDP award holders.

Over the past decade, the CDP scheme has had a substantial impact on research across UK cultural and heritage collections. Between academic years 2013/14 and 2023/24, the scheme supported 500 studentships, enabling 500 extended research projects across national and regional collections. In total, 82 universities have served as host institutions during this period².

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy outlines our collective ambition to create an inclusive, equitable, and supportive research culture that values and reflects the

¹ [Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships \(CDP\) – UKRI](#)

² Surya Bowyer, Shreya Gupta, Liberty Paterson and Niti Acharya, **‘State of the (Future) Field: The History of Collecting and Its Institutions’**, *History*, vol. 109, no. 391 (2024), pp. 298–328 (Data provided to the authors by J.D. Hill, former chair of the CDP Consortium.)

diversity of our doctoral researcher community. This CDP EDI Strategy is applicable to all cohorts of the CDP Scheme.

We acknowledge that systemic inequality and structural barriers remain prevalent across both the heritage and higher education sectors. Our doctoral researchers particularly those from the global majority backgrounds, disabled and neurodivergent, parent/carers, and those from working class households continue to face disproportionate challenges. This strategy reflects our determination to address these inequities not only through aspirational commitments, but through measurable actions.

This strategy has been co-developed with the voices of CDP doctoral researchers at its centre. A series of focus groups held in early 2025 provided insight into the everyday experiences of those navigating the doctoral journey within our consortium. We recognise the need for institutional and cultural change, and this strategy provides the foundation for that change.

Our vision is to make equity the norm, not the exception. We will do this by:

- Embedding inclusive practice into all areas of CDP governance, operations and training. These inclusive practices will ensure that individuals from all backgrounds – regardless of race, gender, disability, social class, or other characteristics, have equal opportunities, feel valued, and can fully participate in research.
- Fostering a culture of respect, accessibility, and mutual learning.
- Ensuring all doctoral researchers can thrive regardless of background or identity.
- Being transparent in our actions and accountable in our progress.

This strategy will evolve alongside our understanding and will be shaped through continuous feedback from those it is designed to support.

Naa-Anyima Boateng
CDP EDI Co-Ordinator

Executive Summary

This EDI Strategy for 2025–27 sets out the CDP Consortium’s priorities and actions to embed inclusive practice across all areas of the doctoral experience. This two-year strategy has been funded by the AHRC and mirrors the current funding for the CDP Consortium Coordination Group, based at the V&A, which ends on 31 March 2027.

The CDP Consortium’s members are committed to fostering an inclusive research culture that values equality, diversity, and inclusion at every stage. We aim to anticipate and remove barriers to participation, ensuring fair access to supervision, training, and career opportunities across all partner institutions. By embedding flexibility, accessibility, collaboration, and personalisation in doctoral training, we aim to support the varied needs and aspirations of all our doctoral researchers.

Our goal is to create an equitable environment where every doctoral researcher can thrive and contribute fully to academic and professional communities. Informed by focus groups with CDP doctoral researchers from underrepresented backgrounds, this 2-year strategy identifies the barriers facing global majority, disabled and neurodivergent, parent/carers, doctoral researchers from working class or international backgrounds. A call was issued to establish a focus group for LGBTQ+ doctoral researchers; however, we were unable to secure participants during this cycle. The need for this engagement remains a priority, and we will continue efforts to convene this focus group through targeted outreach, improved timing, and ongoing communication with relevant networks and stakeholders. Issues raised included difficulties accessing research funding, navigating institutional cultures, and inadequate structural support.

The Strategy is anchored in six pillars:

- **Ongoing Support:** Offering practical and emotional support tailored to different lived experiences.
- **Training:** Developing inclusive supervision and equipping CDP Doctoral researchers to advocate for themselves.
- **Governance and Decision-Making:** Embedding representation, transparency, and participatory design.
- **Award Management:** Reducing financial inequality and enabling full research participation.
- **Inclusive Recruitment:** Increasing access and fairness in the application process.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Creating mechanisms for accountability and continuous learning.

The CDP Consortium recognises that EDI is a shared responsibility requiring active participation from partner institutions, supervisors, and researchers themselves. This strategy is our framework for systemic change, and its success depends on collective action. This Strategy is designed to complement and support the ambitions of AHRC's *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan*, the EDI strategies of CDP award holders, and EDI strategies of partner universities.

Introduction

The CDP Consortium is a doctoral training partnership that brings together major UK cultural and heritage organisations and universities to co-deliver PhDs that combine academic rigour with sector-based collaboration. While the Consortium operates as a coordinated network, AHRC funding is awarded directly to individual CDP doctoral researchers to support studentships. In addition, the AHRC funds the CDP Coordination team, which plays a central role in coordinating and supporting the work of the CDP Consortium as a whole.

Our community includes doctoral researchers who span a wide range of backgrounds, life experiences, and identities. It is our ethical duty to ensure this community is equitably supported. We believe inclusive research cultures produce better, more innovative, and more impactful work.

EDI is not a parallel strand of work but a core foundation of our programme that must be intertwined in all aspects of our work. This strategy is the beginning of a long-term shift in our structures, policies and cultures. It is underpinned by real-world feedback, and it will be implemented collaboratively.

The CDP Consortium aligns its values and commitments with those of the AHRC, which actively promotes equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusivity across its research ecosystem³. We share AHRC's understanding that the strength of arts and humanities disciplines lies in their multiplicity of voices, methodologies, and perspectives. These practices ensure that individuals from all backgrounds, regardless of race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, social class, or other characteristics, have equal opportunities, feel valued, and can fully participate in society. Freedom of research is fundamentally tied to a plurality of viewpoints⁴.

The CDP Consortium is committed to ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to our operations, not only as legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality, but also as moral and academic imperatives. Our ambition is to exceed compliance, embed inclusive practices across our governance, doctoral researcher support, training programmes, and institutional culture.

1 [Arts and Humanities Research Council \(AHRC\), which actively promotes equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusivity across its research ecosystem.](#)

2 [Freedom of research is fundamentally tied to a plurality of viewpoints](#)

This is an EDI Strategy informed by the lived realities of CDP doctoral researchers, observations from our CDP Award Holders and driven by a collective ambition to dismantle systemic inequities. By embedding inclusion at every level, the CDP Consortium affirms that diverse perspectives are essential to the strength and integrity of the research community.

This strategy draws directly from CDP doctoral researcher focus groups and feedback and is supported by AHRC's broader vision, which includes:

- Creating transparent and equitable governance and decision-making processes.
- Addressing structural underrepresentation, particularly of global majority, disabled and neurodivergent and working class doctoral researchers.
- Building a strong evidence base through stakeholder participation.
- Fostering partnerships and collaborations across UKRI and beyond.
- Celebrating the contribution of diverse voices to the strength of our disciplines.

We will build on AHRC's long-term EDI priorities by applying them across the CDP community. This includes:

- Diversifying our advisory panels and recruitment mechanisms.
- Improving representation within award holders and doctoral researchers.
- Collaborating with UKRI and Research Councils to address structural challenges.
- Enhancing inclusivity in the CDP Consortium's own structures and staff.

Our approach is strategic, and evidence informed. We will monitor change using near term and long-term deliverables aligned to this EDI strategies pillars, objectives and the AHRC's Framework. The EDI actions progress will be further monitored and governed by the CDP EDI Action group. Summaries of progress against the CDP EDI Action plan will also be published within the CDP Newsletter. These are further detailed on the CDP EDI Action Plan⁵.

Governance

Increase diversity of CDP panels and boards to reflect under-represented groups.

Improve transparency and satisfaction with EDI decision-making processes across review and committee bodies.

Evidence & Data

Map barriers to participation across the CDP network and use findings to inform change.

⁵ [CDP EDI Action plan 2025](#)

Embed consistent collection and use of EDI data in decision-making, award management, and researcher support.

Partnerships & Collaboration

Conduct Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for all new CDP initiatives to ensure inclusive design.

Expand collaboration with EDI-focused stakeholders (e.g., sector partners, community organisations) and integrate insights into practice.

Maintain quarterly collaboration with UKRI/AHRC EDI teams to align strategy, monitor progress, and share learning.

Research Impact & Disciplinary Strength

Appoint an EDI Coordinator to lead strategy implementation, monitor impact and support inclusive research culture.

Publish disaggregated data on applications, awards, progression and completion to identify and address discipline-level disparities.

Communications & Engagement

Publish a minimum of six EDI-focused stories annually, showcasing the diversity of CDP doctoral researchers, barriers faced, and successes achieved.

Monitor engagement with communications and digital content using feedback and analytics to refine EDI messaging and reach.

Informed by these shared commitments and measures, this CDP EDI Strategy will guide our practices, reinforce our accountability, and elevate equity across all levels of our consortium operations.

EDI Objectives (2025–2027)

The CDP Consortium has set out the following EDI objectives in order of priority to be achieved through to March 2027:⁶

Objective 1: Develop and embed tailored support systems for doctoral researchers with intersecting underrepresented identities, ensuring all doctoral researchers feel supported and empowered.

Objective 2: Build EDI capability across all supervisors and staff through mandatory training and resources, while providing doctoral researchers with tools to navigate challenges.

Objective 3: Promote diverse representation in governance, with transparent decision-making processes and meaningful doctoral researcher participation.

Objective 4: Make our financial and award management systems responsive to the cost-of-living crisis, access needs, and post-PhD transition challenges.

Objective 5: Ensure that our doctoral recruitment process is inclusive, equitable, and accessible to applicants from underrepresented groups.

Objective 6: Develop a robust data monitoring, evaluation and reporting infrastructure to assess progress and drive improvements.

Each objective will be delivered through a detailed action plan and annual reporting to the CDP EDI Action Group and CDP Business Group. These groups will include representation from Student Reps, Doctoral Researchers for each protected characteristics group, Award holders and Supervisors within the consortium.

This strategy outlines how we will tailor our actions according to the needs of specific groups within the CDP doctoral researcher community.

³ From 2026 onwards the scheme will be called Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Awards.

Objective 1: Tailored Support Systems

What our stakeholders said:

Flexible Funding:

“Our current funding model is too rigid. It cannot be “one size fits all” given the diversity of our researchers. The funding system must reflect and support the varied approaches, backgrounds, and realities of those conducting research.”

(CDP Award Holder)

Staff Health and Wellbeing:

“There must be a greater prioritisation and investment in researcher and staff wellbeing. A healthy and supported team is essential for meaningful and sustainable research.”

(CDP Award Holder)

Belonging in the Arts and Heritage Sector:

“At times, the Arts and Heritage sector does not feel like a space where I belong. It can feel exclusive and unwelcoming, particularly to those from underrepresented backgrounds.”

(2nd Year CDP Doctoral Researcher)

Representation vs Tokenism:

“I sometimes feel that my presence in the Arts and Heritage sector is more about ticking a box than recognising the value I bring. I want to be seen and respected as someone with meaningful contributions to make—not just as a symbol of diversity.”

(Final year CDP Doctoral Researcher)

What we will do:

Global Majority Doctoral Researchers

Peer Support Networks: Facilitate ongoing Global Majority doctoral researcher affinity groups and mentorship pairings with racially diverse academics and professionals to reduce isolation and foster belonging.

Career Development with Visa Awareness: Provide tailored workshops and one-on-one guidance for global majority doctoral researchers navigating postdoctoral employment and visa transitions. This does not constitute legal advice.

Addressing Racial Microaggressions: Train supervisors and institutional staff in anti-racist practice, with clear reporting procedures for bias, discrimination, or exclusion. Commission anti-racism and allyship training for individuals involved in supporting the CDP doctoral researcher community.

Visibility and Celebration: Recognise the contributions and achievements of global majority doctoral researchers through awards, blog features, and leadership opportunities.

International Doctoral Researchers

Cultural Orientation and Onboarding: Create tailored welcome packs including, cultural orientation and guidance on opening bank accounts, securing accommodation, transport systems, access to NHS services, navigating visa systems, and accessing student services. You can find guides for supporting International Students at the [UK Council for International Students Affairs](#).

Consistent Financial Parity: Advocate for equitable funding across institutions for international doctoral researchers, especially where partner institutions vary in bursary levels. Equitable access to travel bursaries and institutional passes, regardless of current address or nationality.

Disabled and Neurodivergent Doctoral Researchers

Flexibility: Provide template examples of flexible study plans and scheduling support based on individual access needs. Establish best practice examples for doctoral researchers to use when requesting flexible deadlines and phased workloads based on fluctuating capacity.

Accessibility: Ensure all training events are accessible (captioning, quiet rooms, flexible timing). Embed Baseline Access Provision in programme delivery.

Awareness & Allyship: Supervisor training in neurodivergent communication and non-linear productivity, focused on avoiding harmful assumptions like "just start" approaches to procrastination.

Gender Equity amongst Doctoral Researchers and Staff

Safe Spaces and Policies: Develop confidential channels for reporting and addressing gender-based issues, ensuring a safe and supportive environment.

Gender-Focused Training: Offer development sessions that specifically address challenges faced by women and non-binary doctoral researchers, including navigating leadership and supervisory roles.

Intersectionality-Focused Groups: Maintain quarterly focus group sessions as platforms for doctoral researchers to share experiences, build networks, and contribute to policy improvements.

Peer and Supervisor Mentorship Programmes: Establish mentor-mentee frameworks, pairing doctoral researchers with diverse and experienced mentors to provide guidance and advocacy.

Parents and Carers

Tailored Funding: Lobby the UKRI to offer funding for caregiving costs during conferences, fieldwork, or mandatory training. Introduce a "Carer Flexibility Framework" allowing tailored submission schedules and milestone adjustments.

Shared Experiences: Establish a "Parenting While Researching" digital resource hub and toolkits with shared experiences and guides.

Recognition of Family Impact: Acknowledge that PhD demands affect entire households; support flexible timelines and additional time for caregivers.

Social Class Inclusion

Tailored Funding: Launch a "Working-Class Researcher Forum" to elevate voices and share support strategies.

"I am more than enough" Initiative: Highlight flexible and normalise, non-linear academic pathways and provide reassurance on imposter syndrome.

Flexible Financial Structures: Shift from reimbursement-based grants to upfront allocations from CDP Consortium, ensuring immediate access to necessary funds. Provide emergency financial aid and one-time technology grants.

Support for Working Class Doctoral: Advocate for expanded bursaries and grants targeting working class doctoral researchers and provide tailored financial guidance.

Support for all Doctoral Researchers

Peer Mentorship & Affinity Groups: Establish structured peer networks based on shared experiences.

Advocacy Support: Create confidential advocacy support systems to help doctoral researchers self-advocate or escalate needs without fear of judgement or consequence.

Support the development of staff networks from protected characteristics and underrepresented groups as appropriate, within the CDP Award Holders or in collaboration with our HEI partners, to strengthen the collective voice of our doctoral researchers and staff.

Objective 2: Supervisor and Doctoral Researcher Training

What our Stakeholders told us:

Supervisory Support:

Our supervisors need to develop a deeper understanding of the diverse needs of researchers and adopt a more flexible approach that enables them to thrive.

(2nd Year CDP Researcher).

What we will do:

Supervisor Development

Bespoke EDI Supervisor Training: Mandatory annual EDI refresher training for all supervisors and CDP decision makers across institutions to build awareness on intersectionality and bias.

Training modules to include:

- Racial microaggressions
- Disability etiquette
- Neurodiverse supervision
- Training in working Social Class Awareness
- Inclusive feedback practices.

Training will also incorporate scenario-based learning and case studies from CDP doctoral researchers and decision makers.

EDI Workshops: Conduct regular training sessions on topics such as cultural competency, inclusive research practices, and anti-discrimination policies. First workshop to take place in Spring 2026 to tackle two key areas: selection/interviewing and ongoing support during the CDP Researchers' PhD.

Cohort Development Programme Integration: Integrate EDI principles into the programme to foster an understanding of diversity and inclusion in research contexts.

Continuous Learning: Encourage ongoing learning opportunities for staff and doctoral researchers to stay informed about best practices in EDI.

Researcher Empowerment

Skills for Employability: Offer workshops on CV writing, interview techniques, and effective networking, tailored to support transitions into careers post-CDP.

Intersectional Learning: Create modules addressing the unique barriers faced by doctoral researchers at the intersections of gender, social class, race, disability and other identities. Deliver quarterly skill sessions:

- Advocating for Yourself.
- EDI in Research.
- Imposter Syndrome and Identity.
- Confidence building for, networking, publishing and public speaking.
- Understanding funding entitlements and navigating institutional hierarchies and systems.

Objective 3: Governance and Decision-Making

What our Stakeholders told us:

“We recognise that access to the CDP programme can currently vary based on prior familiarity with the sector. This often results in opportunities being more visible to those already embedded in the heritage or academic world – creating a perceived “who you know” barrier.”

(CDP Award Holder)

“We need to better understand the needs of our diverse population and ensure that our potential researchers are given real opportunities to be engaged, included, considered, and given a voice throughout all stages of our decision-making processes.”

(CDP Award Holder)

“We need to improve the ways we gather diversity monitoring data of the Researchers and communities that we engage with.”

(CDP Award Holder)

What we will do:

Inclusive Advisory Structures: Ensure that decision-making groups, boards committees and interview panels include doctoral researcher voices from across underrepresented groups. Rotate positions regularly and publish criteria for selection.

Ensure at least 30% of decision-making groups include people from backgrounds underrepresented. Develop our public engagement mechanisms to maximise opportunities to reach diverse communities in the design and commissioning of Research Opportunities.

Policy and Co-Design: Hold biannual town halls style meetings for policy input and inform organisations such as the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE). Maintain an anonymous feedback portal

linked to the EDI Action Group made of both CDP Doctoral Researchers and CDP Award Holders.

Transparency and Co-Creation: Commit to shared decision-making in EDI strategy review. Offer co-design opportunities in policies affecting student welfare, funding, and workload expectations.

EDI Data Disclosure: Collect and annually publish anonymised data on doctoral researcher demographics, funding distribution, and attrition to inform inclusive practices and identify areas for intervention⁷. Ensure that our Award Holders have access to up-to-date data and evidence about underrepresented groups within our doctoral researcher population and are aware of the inequalities they face. Gather diversity monitoring data as standard in all our engagement activities.

Accountability: Embed processes to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are routinely and robustly completed in all aspects of decision-making, and their findings are integral to improving research outcomes and reducing doctoral researcher inequalities. Publish annual summaries EIA impact statements with disaggregated data and share public response plans with progress timelines.

⁷**Data Protection, Handling, and Retention-** All demographic and diversity monitoring information will be collected, stored, and processed in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**. Data will be used solely for monitoring, reporting, and enhancing inclusive practice, and will remain **confidential, securely stored, and anonymised before publication** to prevent identification of individuals. Personal data will only be retained for as long as is necessary to fulfil its stated purpose and in line with institutional retention schedules. Individuals have the right to withdraw or amend their data, request access, and seek clarification on its use at any time. Data will never be shared externally in identifiable form, nor used for decision-making about individuals.

Objective 4: Award Management

What our Stakeholders told us:

- Doctoral Researchers in high-cost areas reported that current stipends, even with weighting, do not always match actual living costs.
- Several participants shared that unexpected costs (e.g., caring responsibilities, disability adjustments, or emergencies) have a direct impact on research progress.

“Life happens, illness, caring responsibilities, but the system doesn’t always flex when we need it to. It would help if processes were designed with that in mind.” 1st Year CDP Doctoral Researcher.

- Concerns that additional funds are difficult to access quickly when needed.

“It’s stressful having to cover costs upfront and then wait weeks for reimbursement – it puts people without savings at a real disadvantage.” Final Year CDP Doctoral Researcher.

- There is a lack of clarity in the communication as to the policy and rules for funding on the CDP Programme.

“Sometimes it feels like there are three different versions of the rules, depending on who you ask. Clear, consistent guidance would make a huge difference.” 2nd Year CDP Doctoral Researcher

What we will do:

Equity-Based Funding: Continue to advocate for London weighting and explore the feasibility of top-ups in other high-cost areas. Launch the "CDP+ Fund" to provide rapid support for care, disability, and emergency costs.

Accessible Research Funding: Replace reimbursement-only processes with upfront funds where needed. Publicity of Allow use of research budgets and funding. access to RTSG for funding for caring needs and access to Disables Students Allowance (DSA) for assistive equipment for disabled and neurodivergent doctoral researchers under direct management of the CDP consortium. We also need to advocate for similar approaches through university partners and CDP award holders.

Clear Communication: Develop and maintain a clear, centralised FAQ document covering finance and funding processes, ensuring consistency across all communications and points of contact.

Flexible Enrolment & Progression: Advocate for easier transitions to part-time study without disproportionate financial loss or administrative complexity.

Career Transitions: Explore the potential to offer bridge support to global majority and disabled and doctoral researchers from working class backgrounds post-submission. Partner with host institutions to develop transition pathways into heritage and academic roles.

Objective 5: Inclusive Recruitment of CDP Doctoral Researchers

What our stakeholders told us:

“There is also a geographical inequality that disproportionately impacts students from under-represented groups. I could not have accessed a studentship with a partner organisation near where I live because there aren’t any. The partners are overwhelmingly in London. This creates significant barriers for people outside the South-East and is especially challenging for anyone with caring responsibilities or without independent financial means. For researchers like me, relocating simply isn’t an option.” (*CDP 2nd Year Doctoral Researcher*)

Representation Matters: We must ensure that our doctoral researchers are more representative of the communities they serve. A more inclusive research landscape leads to more relevant, impactful outcomes.

Targeted Recruitment & Progression: It’s vital to provide targeted recruitment and progression opportunities for underrepresented groups within our workforce. This is essential to achieving diverse representation at all levels, including leadership.

Investing in Talent: We must invest in robust talent management programmes to develop, support, and retain world-class researchers, both in the UK and globally.

What we will do:

Implementation Commitment: To meet this objective, the CDP Consortium requires its Award Holders and Supervisors to take active ownership of inclusive recruitment, embedding it as a core element of organisational culture change. This includes:

- Prioritising improvements in representation of global majority, disabled, working class and other underrepresented groups within doctoral researcher cohorts.
- Ensuring diverse representation across CDP recruitment, governance, and steering committees.
- Embedding accountability for inclusive practices at all levels of the recruitment process.

Inclusive Outreach & Representation: Promote CDP opportunities across platforms, such as social media (WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn and Job search engines purposed for

specific protected characteristics), and community groups accessed by working-class communities, racialised groups, disabled communities, and international students. Use accessible language and highlight non-linear career pathways to challenge traditional narratives.

- **De-biasing the Application Process** – Online training made available for CDP recruitment panel members in anti-bias and inclusive decision-making.
- **Introduce a system of ‘comply or explain’ to ensure fairness during interviews** – This system includes requirements for diverse interview panels, and the presence of an equality representative who has authority to stop the selection process, if it was deemed unfair.
- **Organise recruitment panels to:**
 - Create a central ‘Opportunities Page’ on the CDP website to advertise job openings, fellowships, and short-term projects across all 15 Award Holders.
 - Prioritise visibility of roles for final-year and recently completed CDP doctoral researchers.
 - Encourage CDP Award Holders to share roles proactively and commit to inclusive job design and recruitment practices.
 - Champion positive action approaches to filling recruitment of doctoral researchers from under-represented groups. To include targeted open days and information sessions.
- **Enhance EDI support available to:**
 - Train our Award Holders teams on how to complete robust and effective Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of recruitment and policies.
- **Advocate for inclusive interview processes to incorporate:**
 - Training on good practice with instructions to hiring managers to ensure fair and inclusive practices are used.
 - Encourage the adoption of values-based or competency-based shortlisting and interview approach.
 - Consider skills-based assessment such as using scenarios.
 - Encourage fair and transparent selection practices by implementing anonymised assessment of written applications.
 - Provide inclusive scoring rubrics that prioritise potential, lived experience, passion for the subject, and commitment to subject areas not just traditional academic achievements.
 - Train recruitment panels in anti-bias and inclusive selection methods.

- **Adopt resources**, guides, and tools to help CDP Award Holders, Supervisors and Doctoral Researchers to have productive conversations about race, sexuality, disability and neurodiversity, social class, parent/carers and gender.

Broadening Access

Partner with universities with high proportions of first-generation, working-class and racially diverse doctoral researchers. Offer inclusive information sessions, with jargon-free explanations of the CDP model and PhD life. Feature video and written testimonies from doctoral researchers of underrepresented backgrounds in recruitment campaigns.

Geographic Inequality and Accessibility: Current CDP partner locations are concentrated in London and the South-East, limiting access for candidates living elsewhere in the UK. This disproportionately affects applicants from lower-income backgrounds, those with caring responsibilities, disabled researchers, and others for whom relocation is not possible. Addressing geographic disparities is essential to widening participation and ensuring equitable access.

Transparent Funding & Entitlement Information: Provide clear, pre-application guidance on stipends, institutional support, bursaries, and exclusions (e.g., lack of statutory parental leave for international students).

Supporting International Applicants

Eligibility Clarity for International Doctoral researchers: Clearly communicate eligibility regarding visa types, tuition support, and part-time restrictions to avoid misinformed decisions.

Develop a visa and relocation guide using guidance from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and partner universities' International Student Support Offices for prospective international doctoral researchers, including practical visa support and information on working rights during and after study. Ensure consistent information across all CDP projects. Offer webinars addressing international students' concerns and legal entitlements.

Objective 6: Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

What Our Stakeholders told us:

- **Need for regular, trusted feedback mechanisms:** Doctoral Researchers reported that one-off surveys or ad-hoc feedback channels often lead to slow or unclear change. There was a strong preference for predictable, ongoing opportunities to share views (quarterly focus groups seen as effective).
- **Value of intersectional analysis:** Participants highlighted that single-category data (e.g. only disability or only ethnicity) can mask the realities of overlapping barriers; they stressed the importance of tracking and addressing intersectional patterns.
- **Positive framing of identity and experience:** Doctoral Researchers expressed frustration at deficit-based language around disability, care roles, or minority identity, which can lead to internalised stigma. They wanted recognition of the strengths and skills developed through these experiences.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Focus group members wanted to see visible outcomes from feedback, annual EDI reviews and public reporting were seen as essential to trust-building.
- **Recognition and celebration:** There was appetite for celebrating EDI progress and individuals driving change, to counterbalance the narrative of constant “problems to fix.”

What we will do:

- **Quarterly Focus Groups:** Continue intersectional focus groups as an embedded feedback mechanism that informs real-time policy updates and supporting doctoral researchers wellbeing.
- **Annual EDI Review:** Conduct and publish a yearly review of the EDI strategy, including action updates and next steps. Involve student representatives from across demographic groups.
- **Recognising Intersectionality as Strength:** Reframe the narrative from “burden” to “value”, acknowledging that diverse lived experiences enrich research and institutional culture. Promote positive language around disability and care roles, counteracting internalised dependency or deficit models.

Data and Reporting

- **Collect and review annual data on recruitment**, progression, retention, and experience by identity group. Monitor intersectional trends to identify patterns and gaps.
- **Independent Evaluation Commission** an audit of EDI practices in early 2027 across the Consortium. Benchmark against national data and sector good practice. We need to ensure that our Doctoral Researchers feed into this process.

Implementation and Review

- **Frameworks for Implementation, Monitoring and Review.** This strategy will be further developed throughout the 2025-26 operational year and will be regularly reviewed to reflect changing/emerging needs and new strategies developed by the CDP Consortium.

The objectives contained in this strategy will be worked into a detailed EDI Action Plan. Progress on the delivery of these objectives will be regularly reviewed by the Student Representatives, CDP Business Group and the CDP EDI Action Group.

We will report on progress made upon these objectives in our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Annual Report for 2025-26. This report will also contain our review of doctoral researcher relations data which outlines the makeup of our workforce by each protected characteristic where possible, along with our reporting against the national Arts and Heritage Sector standards.

Other frameworks and mechanisms for measuring our progress against this strategy include:

- Information monitored and reported upon as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010)
- Feedback from EDI-related committees and groups such as the CDP EDI Focus Groups and Staff Networks.
- Metrics, such as Model Researcher targets and Race Disparity Ratio- *Model Researcher Targets* refer to measurable goals set to ensure that the researcher population reflects the diversity of the wider society or workforce pipeline. Rather than aiming for quotas, these targets function as **benchmarks** used to monitor representation across identities such as ethnicity, disability, gender, and social class.

They help institutions understand whether recruitment, retention, and progression systems are supporting an equitable researcher community—or whether barriers are resulting in the underrepresentation of specific groups.

Example: If 20% of UK postgraduate applicants identify as Global Majority, but only 6% of CDP researchers do, the gap signals structural inequity requiring intervention.

Race Disparity Ratio - The *Race Disparity Ratio* measures the relative likelihood of people from different racial or ethnic groups receiving access to opportunities—such as being shortlisted, offered a studentship, or progressing successfully.

It compares outcomes between a dominant group and an underrepresented group to reveal whether the system operates fairly.

Example: If white applicants are twice as likely to be awarded a funded PhD than Global Majority applicants, the Race Disparity Ratio is 2:1 – indicating disproportionality. This metric helps move beyond raw numbers and toward understanding *equity of access*, not just representation.

- Accountability of our decision makers - ensuring that individuals involved in decision-making, such as selection panels, supervisors, governance boards, and administrative leads, are responsible for the fairness, transparency, and equity of their decisions. This includes demonstrating how decisions are made, ensuring they align with EDI commitments, and being answerable for outcomes and any disparities identified. This also requires decision makers to act on evidence, feedback, and audit findings, and to participate in training and continuous improvement to reduce bias and strengthen inclusive practices.

This strategy is supported by a detailed action plan that will:

1. Be reviewed and updated annually
2. Be monitored by the CDP EDI Task Group
3. Include clear metrics with measures of progress, timelines, and assigned leads
4. Feed into a public annual report

Ongoing progress will be shared with doctoral researchers, institutions, and the wider Awarded partnerships typically which include diverse non-academic sectors such as **heritage institutions** (e.g., museums, archives, heritage trusts and libraries), **public sector organisations**, and other bodies operating outside of

academia. The doctoral researcher voice will remain central to implementation through structured participation mechanisms.

Conclusion

This is an EDI Strategy informed by the lived realities of CDP doctoral researchers, observations from our CDP Award Holders and driven by a collective ambition to dismantle systemic inequities. By embedding inclusion at every level, the CDP Consortium affirms that diverse perspectives are essential to the strength and integrity of the research community.

By integrating these comprehensive measures, the CDP Consortium aims to not only meet but exceed the expectations for fostering an inclusive research environment. This strategy represents a collective commitment to addressing barriers and building a community where all researchers can excel and contribute authentically.

This strategy is a living document, that is not static, but rather it is designed to evolve, and be led by the needs and voices of doctoral researchers and staff from all backgrounds. It will be reviewed annually and shaped continuously by those it exists to support. By embedding support for underrepresented communities, the CDP Consortium aims to build a doctoral research culture rooted in justice, equity, and collective flourishing.

The CDP Consortium reaffirms its unwavering commitment to inclusive excellence. We acknowledge that EDI work is never finished, it must evolve through active listening, reflection, accountability, and innovation. We invite all partners, doctoral researchers, supervisors, institutions, and heritage organisations, to co-create a research culture where equity is the norm, not the exception.

Appendix 1: Focus Group Summaries

This appendix includes anonymised summaries from the 2025 EDI focus groups, highlighting key themes, barriers identified, and proposals made by CDP doctoral researchers across six identity-informed cohorts: Race/Global Majority, Disability & Neurodiversity, Gender, Parents & Carers, Social Class, and International Doctoral Researchers, EDI focus groups led by Naa-Anyima Boateng and Alex Grindley. There was a focus throughout all the groups on systemic change and inclusive practices.

Focus Group 1: Disabled and Neurodiverse Doctoral Researchers

Date: March 2025

This focus group explored the unique challenges faced by disabled and neurodivergent CDP doctoral researchers, focusing on barriers, support systems, and the need for inclusive supervision and policies. The discussion was rich with personal experiences and highlighted systemic gaps.

Key Themes and Anonymous Quotes:

1. Linear Career Pathways as Barriers:

- Participants noted that traditional academic and career pathways often exclude those who take alternative routes.
- *“If you don’t get the GCSEs or A-levels at the start, people assume you won’t succeed later. That’s not true, but the narrative persists.”*

2. Navigating Neurodiversity:

- Doctoral Researchers with ADHD and autism shared the difficulty of balancing productivity and communication.
- *“I can focus for 200 hours one week and then struggle to do anything the next. Explaining this to supervisors is exhausting.”*

3. Supervisory Support:

- Experiences with supervisors varied, with some being supportive and others needing more awareness.
- *“I feel like I’m constantly advocating for myself, and it’s tiring. Supervisors need more training on how to work with neurodiverse researchers.”*

4. Internalised Burden and Impostor Syndrome:

- Many participants felt they were perceived as burdens, which impacted their self-esteem and productivity.
- *“If you’re constantly talking about the negatives of your condition, it’s easy to internalise those as weaknesses.”*

Recommendations:

- Provide EDI training for supervisors.
- Create structures that reduce the need for constant self-advocacy.
- Foster a culture of allyship to share the emotional labour of advocacy.

Focus Group 2: Doctoral Researchers from working class backgrounds

May 2025

This session focused on the barriers and facilitators experienced by CDP doctoral researchers from working class backgrounds. Discussions emphasised financial struggles, cultural capital, and the importance of mentorship.

Key Themes and Anonymous Quotes:

1. Cultural and Financial Barriers:

- Participants discussed feeling out of place in middle-class-dominated academic spaces.
- *“Sometimes, you don’t even know the right questions to ask because the environment feels so alien.”*

2. Importance of Mentorship:

- Mentors from similar backgrounds played a significant role in participants’ academic journeys.
- *“Meeting someone who proudly identified as working class helped me see my background as an asset, not a liability.”*

3. Challenges with Policies and Funding:

- Lack of clarity around funding and institutional policies created additional stress.

- *“I didn’t know the details of the funding policies until after I started. It would have been helpful to know beforehand.”*

4. **Equity vs. Equality:**

- Participants called for equity-focused policies that cater to individual needs.
- *“One-size-fits-all funding doesn’t work. Some of us need more support to even get to the starting line.”*

Recommendations:

- Simplify and clarify funding and policy documents.
- Implement equity-based adjustments in financial and institutional support.
- Strengthen mentorship and reverse mentorship programs to provide guidance, education and advocacy.

Focus Group 3: Parents and Carers in Academia

Date: March 2025

This session focused on the challenges faced by CDP doctoral researchers with parenting and caregiving responsibilities, highlighting financial constraints, time management, and institutional inflexibility. Participants emphasised the need for tailored support and equitable policies.

Key Themes and Anonymous Quotes:

1. **Workplace Inflexibility:**

- The traditional workplace structure often fails to accommodate caregiving needs.
- *“The workplace isn’t designed for anyone who needs any kind of flexibility.”*

2. **Financial and Logistical Struggles:**

- Limited childcare options and the inability to claim government childcare support exacerbate financial difficulties.
- *“I have to rely on family for childcare, but I can’t claim funding for it. It’s exhausting and expensive.”*

3. **Impact on Research Opportunities:**

- Caregiving responsibilities limit the ability to participate in conferences, networking, and on-site research.
- *“I see all these opportunities, but realistically, I can’t take part in most of them.”*

4. Broader Impact on Families:

- The strain of balancing research and caregiving affects the entire family.
- *“The PhD impacts my whole family. My partner uses all their leave to support me, and we have no time for holidays.”*

Recommendations:

- Develop awareness of flexible policies allowing caregivers to access childcare funding for family-based care.
- Increase fully online academic events to ensure equitable participation.
- Create partnerships among institutions to enable access to local training and resources.
- Advocate for systemic changes to better accommodate doctoral researchers with caregiving responsibilities.

Focus Group 4: Race, Global Majority, Ethnicity, and International Doctoral Researchers

Date: March 2025

This focus group addressed the experiences of international doctoral researchers and researchers from the global majority, emphasising barriers related to visas, finances, and inclusion.

Key Themes and Anonymous Quotes:

1. Visa and Immigration Challenges:

- Doctoral Researchers highlighted the complexities of visa requirements and the stress of maintaining legal status.
- *“Every time I travel, I worry about being questioned at customs. It’s stressful to constantly explain my living situation.”*

2. Financial Constraints:

- The high cost of living, especially in London, was a recurring issue for international students.
- *“Without a dual-income household, living here would be impossible. The stipends are not sufficient.”*

3. Access to Resources:

- Difficulties in accessing housing, bank accounts, and other essential services due to lack of UK-based proof of address were highlighted.
- *“I couldn’t open a bank account because I didn’t have proof of address. It delayed everything for months.”*

4. Institutional Support:

- Participants appreciated the welcoming atmosphere at certain institutions but noted gaps in induction and resource accessibility.
- *“There was no clear induction for international students on basic needs like housing and transport. It was overwhelming at first.”*

5. Good Practices:

- Participants noted positive aspects, such as inclusion initiatives and supportive environments created by staff and curators.
- *“The decolonisation groups and open dialogues at the institution made me feel like these issues were being addressed seriously.”*

6. Logistical Challenges:

- Access to essential research tools, like laptops, was delayed, creating initial hurdles for some doctoral researchers.
- *“I had to use my personal laptop for months because institutional resources were not immediately available.”*

7. Ethical Approval and Marginalisation:

- Research topics related to colonial histories were often categorised as “risky,” leading to additional scrutiny and emotional labour.

- *“The system framed my research on inherited histories as inherently more dangerous than studying white composers. It’s frustrating and emotionally exhausting.”*
- *“Being the only POC in the room brings hyper-visibility and isolation.”*
- *“There’s a lack of representation in leadership and mentoring roles, limiting access to support and networks.”*
- *“It’s unfair when highly regarded roles are held by people with no lived connection to the histories they study.”*

Recommendations:

- Improve transparency on funding and visa policies before program applications.
- Develop comprehensive induction programs tailored to international students.
- Provide enhanced financial support to cover the unique challenges faced by international doctoral researchers.
- Increase advocacy for streamlined visa processes and integration support.
- Address logistical barriers by ensuring adequate resources for doctoral researchers.
- Increase accountability in ethical review processes to ensure equity for underrepresented research topics.
- Foster diverse leadership and mentorship to provide better representation and role models.

Focus Group 5: Doctoral Researchers from underrepresented Genders

The EDI focus groups on gender provided rich discussions about equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts in academic and professional settings. Below is a summary with anonymous quotes included:

Key Themes and Anonymous Quotes:

1. Positive Initiatives and Experiences:

- Many participants praised specific programs like the DTP EDI conference in Manchester, describing it as “empowering” and “a space for consciousness-raising.”
- The development sessions were highlighted for “levelling the field” and providing accessible learning opportunities.

2. Challenges and Systemic Issues:

- A recurring theme was the difficulty in navigating social class diversity and inclusion, especially for those not from the UK. One participant shared, “I had to work throughout my whole education to afford it, and many others don’t share that experience.”
- Institutional inertia was noted, with individuals feeling unsupported in some cases. A participant recalled, “People were tiptoeing around my issues until a third party intervened.”

Recommendations

- The Importance of Safe Spaces with focus groups were valued as platforms for sharing and support. “One of the key things discrimination thrives on is isolation,” someone noted, emphasising the value of collective understanding.
- The need for intersectional approaches was clear, recognising the varied experiences within identity groups. For example, the specific challenges of parent doctoral researchers or individuals with unique cultural needs, like access to prayer spaces were discussed.
- An individual remarked on the importance of understanding differences, stating, “Even though someone else might be a Black woman like me, their experience as a parent or non-parent could differ greatly.”
- Mentorship and Pre-Orientation programs and clearer pre-entry orientations to help new members navigate institutional challenges. “Having someone who’s been through it could have been a game-changer for me,” one participant shared.
- Future Plans and feedback by continuing focus groups post-strategy development was strongly supported, with attendees highlighting their role in ongoing dialogue and accountability.
- Expanding training for supervisors to better understand and respond to doctoral researchers’ challenges was also recommended.

Appendix 2: Annual EDI Milestone Tracker

A live tracker for monitoring implementation progress against the CDP EDI Strategy

This tracker enables award holders, supervisors, and CDP partners to monitor their EDI commitments throughout the year. It aligns directly with the CDP EDI Strategy pillars and is designed to:

- Capture **key milestones** and progress updates.
- Identify **responsible leads** for each action.
- Track **indicators of success**.
- Create a central record of feedback and challenges.
- Provide evidence for **annual EDI reporting**.

It should be updated at least quarterly and reviewed annually as part of the CDP EDI review cycle.

Template Table for Award Holder Use

EDI Strategy Pillar	Action / Commitment	Key Date(s)	Action Lead	Indicators of Success	Progress Update	Feedback / Barriers	Status (RAG)
Recruitment	Host inclusive recruitment webinar for underrepresented groups	Feb 2026	Supervisor + EDI Co-Ordinator	Attendance from target demographics; positive feedback on clarity	[space to update]	[space to update]	● / ● / ●
Ongoing Support	Launch peer network for Global Majority researchers	Apr 2026	Student Rep + EDI Co-ordinator	Network established; number of active members; evidence of peer support	[space to update]	[space to update]	● / ● / ●
Training	Deliver mandatory annual EDI supervisor refresher	May 2026	EDI Coordinator	90%+ supervisor completion; improved confidence scores in survey	[space to update]	[space to update]	● / ● / ●
Governance	Ensure 30%+ governance board from under represented groups	Annual	Governance Chair	Diversity metrics met; members feel their voices influence policy	[space to update]	[space to update]	● / ● / ●
Award Management	Introduce "CDP+ Fund" for access and inclusion	Dec 2025	CDP Coordination Team	Fund established; number and diversity of beneficiaries	[space to update]	[space to update]	● / ● / ●

EDI Strategy Pillar	Action / Commitment	Key Date(s)	Action Lead	Indicators of Success	Progress Update	Feedback / Barriers	Status (RAG)
Monitoring	Conduct independent EDI audit	Nov 2026	External Auditor	Audit completed; recommendations acted upon	[space to update]	[space to update]	● / ● / ●

Guidance for Using the Tracker

1. **Set clear, realistic milestones** for each action in your EDI plan.
2. Assign a **named Action Lead** who is accountable for delivery.
3. Use **Indicators of Success** that are measurable (e.g., attendance numbers, diversity metrics, feedback ratings).
4. Update the **Progress** column quarterly with achievements, partial completions, or delays.
5. Record any **Feedback / Barriers** to help shape future actions or request additional support.
6. Use the **RAG status** system:
 -  **On Track** – action progressing as planned.
 -  **At Risk** – some delays or issues but still achievable.
 -  **Off Track** – unlikely to be completed without major intervention.
7. Submit the tracker annually to the CDP EDI Task Force for review.

Appendix 3: Supervisor EDI Self-Assessment Toolkit

A reflective tool for supervisors to self-assess and improve inclusive practice. Includes checklists, scenario questions, and links to further development resources.

Purpose of This Toolkit

The CDP Consortium is committed to fostering inclusive, equitable, and diverse doctoral training environments. Supervisors play a pivotal role in shaping the doctoral researcher experience, from recruitment and induction to ongoing support and career progression. This self-assessment toolkit is designed to help supervisors reflect on their own EDI practice, identify strengths, and highlight areas for improvement.

Completion of this self-assessment is **mandatory** for all CDP supervisors. Supervisors are required to complete this toolkit **annually** and additionally whenever a significant change occurs in their supervisory role (e.g., new supervisees, new institutional responsibilities, or substantive EDI-related learning).

Findings from this self-assessment should inform participation in the **biannual EDI Supervisor Workshops**, where supervisors will be expected to share anonymised reflections, raise emerging themes, and contribute to collective learning and improvement across the consortium.

How to Use This Toolkit

- **Step 1:** Read each statement carefully.
- **Step 2:** Reflect honestly on your current practice and experiences.
- **Step 3:** Tick the box that best represents your level of confidence or action.
- **Step 4:** Use the “Notes & Actions” section to identify improvements or resources needed.

Rating Scale

- ✓ **Yes, consistently** – This is embedded in my practice.
- ⚠ **Sometimes** – I do this occasionally but not systematically.
- ✗ **Not yet** – This is not yet part of my practice.

Section 1: Understanding and Commitment to EDI

Statement

Notes &
   Actions

I understand the CDP Consortium's EDI Strategy and how it applies to supervision.

I am familiar with the Equality Act (2010) and the nine protected characteristics.

I understand the concepts of **equity**, **intersectionality**, and **structural discrimination** in relation to doctoral training.

I commit to continuous learning about inclusive supervision practices.

I actively encourage open discussion of EDI-related issues with my CDP Doctoral researchers.

Section 2: Inclusive Recruitment and Induction

Statement

Notes &
   Actions

I participate in EDI and anti-bias training before serving on recruitment panels.

I assess candidates based on potential and passion, not just traditional academic metrics.

I ensure recruitment materials are accessible, jargon-free, and inclusive.

I provide an inclusive induction for all new CDP Doctoral researchers, including information on support services.

Section 3: Accessible and Inclusive Supervision

Statement

Notes &
   Actions

I adapt supervision styles to suit the needs of each Doctoral researcher (e.g., neurodivergence, disability, cultural background).

I make sure meetings are scheduled flexibly to accommodate caring responsibilities, religious observance, and health needs.

I am proactive in identifying and removing barriers to participation.

I provide or signpost to accessible resources, e.g., captioned recordings, large-print documents.

Section 4: Supporting Doctoral Researchers Wellbeing and Belonging

Statement

Notes &
   Actions

I promote a safe, respectful, and harassment-free research culture.

I know how to respond appropriately to disclosures of discrimination or harassment.

I support the development of peer networks and affinity groups (e.g., Global Majority Researchers' Forum).

I regularly check in with doctoral researchers about workload, wellbeing, and inclusion.

Section 5: Career Development and Equity of Opportunity

Statement

Notes &
   Actions

I ensure all doctoral researchers have equal access to training, conferences, and funding opportunities.

I support applications for adjustments or additional funding where needed.

I provide tailored career advice that accounts for individual circumstances and barriers.

I champion diverse role models in academia and the heritage sector.

Section 6: Reflection and Action Planning

Question

Response

What are my three strongest areas of EDI practice?

What are three priority areas for improvement?

What resources, training, or support do I need from the CDP Consortium?

What actions will I take in the next 12 months to strengthen EDI in my supervision?

Next Steps

- Discuss your self-assessment with your co-supervisors or line manager.

- Share key action points with the CDP EDI Task Force, if appropriate.
- Revisit this toolkit annually to track progress.

Further appendices will be developed in response to feedback and sector developments.