

## DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Public sector organisations have a statutory duty to consider diversity and equality in all they do. It is no longer sufficient to address potential unfair discrimination as it arises: instead organisations must seek to actively promote equality for all and to avoid discrimination.

This document is intended to provide guidance on how to integrate diversity and equality into project management – in the design, research, write up and implementation of the project.

### What is Diversity?

Diversity is about recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of members of staff, stakeholders and members of the public. We may need to change our existing processes and systems to accommodate diversity.

The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. This may consist of visible and non-visible differences including gender, sexuality, values, age, background, race, disability, religion or belief, personality and work-style. Harnessing these differences creates a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met.

**Equality** is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is mainly about fair treatment and compliance with legislation (the Equality Act 2010) designed to address unlawful discrimination against those who share a protected characteristic, as follows:

- sex
- marriage or civil partnership
- race
- disability
- age
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- religion or belief.
- pregnancy or maternity.

### What is the business case for a diverse and equal approach

- gaining commitment and co-operation from all employees;
- projecting a positive image as an inclusive organisation;
- being an employer of choice and attracting high quality applicants for vacancies from all groups of people
- reducing the risk of not being representative of the target audience;
- acting in an ethical manner;
- achieving customer satisfaction;
- final outcome is of a high standard and fit for purpose.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Project Board Chair and Board Members

- Use the first meeting of the project board to consider how to ensure and promote equality throughout the project and how to eliminate possible areas of discrimination.

- Present ideas to the Project Team.
- Audit the work of the Project Team to ensure that equality and diversity issues are integral to the working of the Project.

### Project Team Manager and Team Members

1. Before - ensure that diversity implications are considered in the design of the project and are carried through in the implementation of the Project Plan.
2. After - use the 'Lessons Learned Log' to:-
  - report on the successes and limitations of the project;
  - evaluate whether diversity was sufficiently considered in the project; and
  - make recommendations for future improvements back to HR and Corporate Services Group, BBSRC Office for wider dissemination.

### **Equality Considerations**

Do not make any subjective assumptions based on the following factors: Sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, race, pregnancy or maternity, age, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief. Create an environment where everyone can contribute and participate e.g. by ensuring that meetings are not hierarchical or intimidating. Consider the timing of meetings for those who may have other responsibilities outside of work.

#### Disability

Ensure that individuals are given the same opportunity to participate and that reasonable adjustments are made as necessary to enable inclusion.

#### Age

Do not make judgements based on stereotypes or discriminate against a person in relation to their age group. Provide the opportunity for them to participate fully according to their skills and abilities.

#### Sexual Orientation

Treat people in accordance to the contribution they can make irrespective of any knowledge or presumption regarding their sexual orientation.

#### Gender reassignment

While remaining sensitive to any knowledge regarding a transsexual person, treat them in accordance to the contribution they can make as a person.

#### Religion or Belief

Good practice includes reasonable flexibility to accommodate time required for religious observances/festivals etc. Consider any dietary requirements at meetings where lunch is provided.

### **Diversity Considerations**

- When selecting your project board and project team, endeavour to ensure that its **membership** is representative of the stakeholders it serves.
- When planning your research, ensure that the **sample group** is representative of the stakeholders concerned.
- Assess the **impact** of the project on diversity target groups. Contact your local HR Department for guidance on how to carry out an equality impact assessment.
- Is one group more likely to be affected? If so, this needs to be recognised and addressed.

## **BBSRC Best Practice Guidance Note**

- Consider whether the project will actively **promote** equality. If it does not, what amendments could be made to achieve this?
- If you are unsure of to what extent your project will impact on diversity and/or equality, seek advice from your local HR Department.

### **Sources of Further Information**

Your local HR Department  
Your local Diversity Champion  
HR and Corporate Services Group, BBSRC Office

### **Linked Documentation**

BBSRC Employment Code – Dignity and Diversity at Work Policy – section A3  
BBSRC Best Practice Guidance Notes