

Review of Progress on the Agile Diversity and Inclusion Plan

September 2024

Context

Agile published the [Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#) in March 2024. The Plan identified key areas of improvement in Agile's approach to diversity and inclusion. To improve those areas, we created an Action Tracker to fulfil commitments under four categories:

- Governance and accountability
- Researcher and research diversity
- Inclusive culture
- Inclusive communication, engagement, and impact

Why now?

September 2024 marks six-months since launching the Diversity and Inclusion Plan. This is a valuable opportunity to pause and reflect on successes and challenges so far, and clarify our priorities for the remaining years of the Agile Initiative.

Review of progress

Below you will find information about specific actions that address the areas for improvement through our four commitments as well as an update on our progress. We have made progress against all actions in the tracker and we have noted areas that require additional attention in the coming months. In particular, we want to do more on accountability, data collection, training, and advancing a positive research culture within Agile. Moving forward, we will review our action tracker monthly and produce another update in March 2025, at the one-year anniversary of our Plan.

Action tracker review and updates

Action	Milestones	Progress update
Commitment One: Governance and Accountability		
1.1 Improve, Approve and Share the Diversity and Inclusion Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI Plan developed and approved. • EDI Plan published and shared with stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Diversity and Inclusion Plan was approved, published, and shared as planned in Spring 2024. • The Plan has been shared in ongoing promotion and outreach meetings. • Assessment of the actions outlined in the plan is now underway.
1.2 Strengthen Diversity and Inclusion Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated EDI roles and responsibilities agreed. • Updated EDI roles and responsibilities communicated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions are underway about how best to share and improve ownership and accountability of EDI across Agile governance.
1.3 Produce Periodic Reporting aligned with the Agile Reporting Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI progress reviewed and reported according to requirements for Agile governance and NERC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting is taking place as required.
1.4 Contribute to Institutional Strategy and Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish contact with the University, Social Sciences, MPLS, Research, and other relevant teams. • Review related EDI strategies, reports and plans. • Feedback Agile findings as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed meetings with EDI leads and Research Culture facilitators in all divisions. • Participating in EDI CoP with professional service staff • Need to strengthen connections to research culture activities and strategies.

Action	Milestones	Progress update
Commitment Two: Researcher and Research Diversity		
2.1 Agree on EDI Success Measures and Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate EDI metrics in Agile MEL framework. Monitor and evaluate EDI indicators, activities, and inputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone revised from original plan to reflect that EDI measures and indicators are being integrated in programme-level MEL framework.
2.2 Review Agile's Data Collection Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand University policies and best practices for collecting data about protected characteristics. Complete Data Protection by Design process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone revised to reflect that this action is more about the Data Protection by Design process and how it informs the collection of EDI data. The priority of this action has been lowered.
2.3 Fund Sprints that advance diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed EDI considerations throughout Sprint call. Provide support to Sprint researchers that improve EDI considerations throughout the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone updated to reflect that EDI is being embedded in all Sprints instead of running EDI-focused Sprint call. Additional EDI funding has been offered to Sprint researchers up to March 2025. This action has been raised in priority.
2.4 Launch Targeted Inclusive Researcher Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current status Develop recommendations Agree and implement recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach and relationship building with professional staff and staff networks underway to broaden the reach of researcher recruitment efforts.
2.5 Implement Standardised Equality Impact Assessment in Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and approve the EIA Template. Agree EIA Process. Implement EIA for future sprints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and approved EIA template, implementation is underway.
2.6 Review Sprint Assessment Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of sprint criteria and updates as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed for Feb 2024 call for Sprints. Lessons learned and further improvements to be applied to calls in Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025 (to be confirmed).

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2.7 Foster Diversity of Proposal Reviewers and Assessment Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of results, including data on diversity from review panels and data collection survey Agree on an action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on diversity (protected characteristics) cannot be collected until the Data Protection by Design process is completed. Outreach and relationship building with professional staff and staff networks underway to broaden the reach of panel recruitment efforts.
2.8 Train Reviewers and Panellists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current state Training development and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on EDI and EIA offered to review panels in Spring 2024. Limited effectiveness, requires further review.
2.9 Review the Application Process to Ensure Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility review of the application process. Update identified areas for improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed for Feb 2024 application process and identified areas for improvement. Lessons learned and further improvements to be applied in Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025 calls.
2.10 Provide Tailored Application Support to Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current state. Support integration of EDI throughout Sprint proposals. Support completion of EIA in full proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone updated to reflect that researchers are supported at the full proposal stage as they complete an EIA rather than receiving a support plan.
2.11 Ensure Researcher Onboarding and Orientation is Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current practices. Embed EDI guidance in onboarding and orientation materials and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone updated to capture how EDI guidance is contributed to capacity building workshops, researcher induction slides and Sprint handbook rather than a specific EDI support plan.
2.12 Provide Mentoring and Support for Researchers Involved in Agile Sprints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct initial exploration and future planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heard mixed reviews on mentoring programmes in meetings with EDI leads and Research Culture facilitators across the divisions. More discussion needed.

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Commitment Three: Inclusive Culture		
3.1 Create and Share Agile Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder engagement. Create and approve values. Review implementation of values in practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional stakeholder engagement. Values created based on Agile's existing ways of working and approved by MG. Milestones now include review of implementation of values.
3.2 Create Agile Complaints Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and approve complaints procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed with OMS Head of Administration and Finance, Agile does not need its own complaints procedure, redirect to OMS and department, and signpost other resources. 'Guidance on inclusive participation with Agile' now included in inception materials and handbook.
3.3 Conduct Diversity and Inclusion Survey for Staff and Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial data analysed and fed into this Action Plan. Design and approval of EDI data collection plan. Roll out of new survey questions and other data collection methods with new research teams as they join. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone updated to reflect discussions about EDI data collection, including decisions about adding to the programme survey and interviews.
3.4 Inclusive Recruitment and People Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current processes and job descriptions Liaise with departmental HR staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The priority of this action has been raised from 3rd to 2nd.

Action	Milestones	Progress update
Commitment Four: Inclusive Communication, Engagement, and Impact		
4.1 Inclusive Communication Framework Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and approve EDI communications framework • Implement EDI communications framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing training on inclusive communications, which will inform the integration of inclusivity and accessibility in all Agile communications. • Outputs are under development
4.2 Ensure Stakeholder Engagement Activities are Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop stakeholder management guidance for Sprint researchers, including EDI considerations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milestone updated to capture how EDI considerations are being embedded into stakeholder engagement, including through the Equality Impact Assessment.
4.3 Promote Recognition and Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and approve recognition and visibility initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial conversations started in Spring 2024 and will continue when new Sprints are underway.