



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan



**Decarbonising  
UK Freight Transport**

## 1 Introduction and aims

The Decarbonising UK Freight Transport network fully embraces equality and diversity and is committed to promoting equal opportunities and inclusion to all and at every level. Our aim is to foster an inclusive culture within the Network, which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all staff, students, partners and stakeholders are respected. The network's is in full alignment with the Bartlett and UCL EDI policies and this statement relates to the specific features of the Network.

The EDI manager, Dr Nishatabbas Rehmatulla, has led the development of the plan. The EDI manager has considerable experience and training through being involved in various gender equality and EDI committees and sub-committees at the Bartlett, UCL. We expect the plan to be reviewed by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and we will consider any comments received. The EDI manager will be designated the roles and responsibilities identified in the EDI plan and ensure that EDI considerations are included in every aspect of the Network's operations including; recruitment, events and network calls. The EDI manager is also the Network manager, and will therefore have representation at the management board, which will ensure that the EDI is represented at the highest level, and that the EDI commitments flow from the top down. Whilst the EDI manager is principally responsible for EDI, the academic staff named as representatives of their institutions in the Network Collaboration Agreement are responsible for delivery of the plan in their individual institutions. The following sections outline the key areas of the Network's operation where EDI are incorporated, followed by a section on monitoring and reporting against the key EDI activities set out in this plan.

## 2 Recruitment and selection

The composition of our leadership (strategy and operations board) team reflects the existing inequalities in energy and transport research, despite encouragement for applications from under-represented groups. This is particularly challenging in the academic sphere (operations board) relative to the industry (strategy board). This is not an issue we can address quickly, but it emphasises the importance of diversity in our recruitment and career progression policies. We will continue to ensure that equality and diversity are considered in all recruitment especially in research positions within each theme. Our partner institutions are the staff employers and all have policies to promote this. All eleven of the partner universities support gender equality, and all are accredited under the Athena Swan Charter to at least the Bronze Award, with several holding Silver Award. Gender equality is important and relatively easy to monitor, but we recognise it is not the only EDI issue. We aim for our recruitment processes to be broadly inclusive and to ensure wider aspects of unconscious bias are addressed.

## 3 Events

We will ensure a diverse range of staff and external stakeholders are involved as speakers in the events, workshops and seminars organised by the Network. We will ensure that participants in events organised by the network have a balanced representation (gender, ethnicity and early career researchers). We will give consideration and ensure that all events consider accessibility at the venues, the timing of the events takes place during core hours (10am – 4pm), ensure dietary requirements are taken into account and ensure that majority of the networking opportunities occur during the core hours. All events are led/organised by

the Network manager who is also the Network EDI manager, this will ensure that all aspects of inclusion are considered during the design and running of the events.

## 4 Network calls and small projects

We will support career progression and project leadership on merit alone. The distinction between 'investigators' and 'researchers' in RCUK financial rules makes this problematic in practice. Many research staff on fixed term contracts are excluded from the opportunity to lead projects, with negative effects for equality. We will overcome this by allowing early career researchers to lead the small projects, with mentorship from a PI at the minimum level of 2% FTE. The call for proposal will specifically encourage applications from early career researchers. In addition to flexi funds incorporating features of the EDI e.g. funding for early career researchers, the Network will support the EDI practices of partner universities, which could include part-time contracts, flexible working and career breaks. The calls for proposals will be open to all universities including partner universities (please refer to the review process document for how the Network will managing conflict of interest). The review process document outlines the review process including panel composition, we will ensure that the independent review panel maintains a balanced representation. The strategy board which to a greater extent already has a balanced representation in terms of gender will ratify the final projects.

## 5 Monitoring and reporting

We will ensure that we collect relevant data from the aforementioned key areas of the Network. This includes representation of gender, ethnicity and early career researchers. The data will be gathered by the EDI manager with support from the Network Administrator (Alexis Fidgett). On a number of these areas, such as events, we will ensure that the required data is collected at key points e.g. during online registration. In certain areas we will poll the relevant academics/investigators of the partner institutions to gather more detailed data e.g. on recruitment panel for researchers. We will also collect data in the form of a survey to those who respond to the network calls. The EDI manager will prepare an annual report to present this data. The report will be considered in the Network's operations board and if any areas of improvement are highlighted, the operations board will ensure that reasonable steps are taken/implemented to resolve the issues.