

# Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategy

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## INTRODUCTION

The Geological Society of London is a long standing, prestigious membership organisation representing almost 12,000 members throughout the United Kingdom and around the world. Our mission is to recognise, promote and support our community and celebrate the innovation and creativity geoscience offers for the benefit of society. As such, we recognise the importance of representing and broadening the wide range of backgrounds, talents, and experiences within our Fellowship.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility (EDIA) are essential parts of the Society's core values, a critical thread that runs through our strategy. As a membership organisation with individuals forming the Society, we recognise that we are at differing stages in our EDIA journey, with some areas and people more mature than others:

- **Aware** - EDIA is relatively new to the Society and we are increasingly aware of its importance.
- **Compliant** - EDIA in the Society is focused on compliance with the Equality Act (2010) and all internationally recognised agreements including Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- **Tactical** - EDIA has been integrated into many of the Society's initiatives and activities.
- **Integrated** – EDIA is embedded into everything the Society does by placing emphasis on internal and external efforts.
- **Sustainable** - EDIA efforts follow best practice guidance and remain strong over time through the Society's efforts to continuously improve and evolve.

That said, we wish to publicly state our ambition to improve our efforts to promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility at the Society and throughout the wider community, bringing a renewed desire to be more proactive and courageous. We are committing ourselves to increasing diversity throughout the science by embedding the principles of EDIA into all our activities, encouraging the participation of all irrespective of background.

However, we are conscious of the challenges that lay ahead. Addressing and tackling structural, cultural, and historical inequities embedded in society will prove testing. Nonetheless, this will not deter us from fulfilling our mission to be an inclusive and thriving geoscience community, enthusing the next generation of geoscientists to meet the global challenges of tomorrow.

## WHY IT MATTERS?

Geoscience has been and continues to be one of the least diverse scientific fields when it comes to attracting and retaining people from marginalised backgrounds. Women at senior levels, ethnic minorities, people who are neurodivergent, people who are disabled (visible or invisible), LGBTQIA+ people, those from low socio-economic backgrounds as well as people who identify with multiple overlapping disadvantaged categories are all currently under-represented.

We recognise that there is an urgent need to address and remedy this. While this persists, we, as a community, are limiting the potential contributions from a vast pool of untapped talent.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Equity** - encompasses the policies and practices used to ensure the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time trying to identify and eliminate barriers that have historically prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups.
- **Diversity** includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, we embrace a broader definition that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, physical appearance, geography, and any other identifiers that make one individual or group different from another.
- **Inclusion** - the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, represented, supported, and valued to fully participate.
- **Accessibility** - refers to the commitment to removing barriers, accommodating needs and preferences allowing for everyone to be included in all programs and activities.

## OUR COMMITMENT

We want to drive systemic change and foster a more diverse and inclusive geoscience community, where everybody feels included and can participate in and contribute to the advancement of the science.

To maximise impact, this will be done by working with partners (stakeholders) throughout the geoscience community (such as BGS, HESA, EDI Geo, DIG-UK, IAGD, employers – contractors, consultants, academia) and externally from best practice in other sectors of STEM and society who share our commitment to identify, raise awareness of and address specific challenges acting as barriers participation. We commit ourselves to work towards increasing diversity, supporting, creating, and developing a more accessible and inclusive geoscience community.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### ***1 - Measuring success.***

Where possible the Society will collate, analyse, and use data to ensure an evidence-based approach to our EDIA work. High quality evidence is essential to ensure that the Society's actions are targeted towards areas that have the greatest potential impact.

#### ***Deliverables***

The Society will:

- Review our data collection processes, identify areas for improvement and implement changes where necessary.
- Gather data, via our membership, as well as acquiring and analysing published data on educational participation, higher education statistics, industry, and government reports.
- Embed monitoring of EDIA metrics in Society events, awards and nominations, professional registration, academic attainment etc. Tracking year-on-year changes.
- Report annually on EDIA activities to the Society's Council and Fellowship.
- Track engagement of people with the Society's EDIA related activities on social media
- Periodically produce and communicate statistical outputs on relevant EDIA topics when adequate data has been sourced and analysed.

### ***2 - Identify and address barriers to participation.***

The Society recognises that, historically, women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+, people who are neurodivergent, people with disabilities (visible or hidden) and people from lower socio-economic and disadvantaged backgrounds have been under-represented throughout the community. Unfortunately, this remains the case. The Society aims to identify and remove (wherever possible) these barriers to participation.

#### ***Deliverables***

The Society will:

- Conduct research to better understand the factors limiting the participation of people from underrepresented backgrounds. Communicate results and develop an action plan based on the findings.
- Encourage systemic improvements in the policies and practices throughout the community to create a more accessible and inclusive environment.
- Conduct surveys to gather information on marginalised experiences and identify impediments to inclusion and progression.
- Recognise and champion the achievements of a wider range of role models to inspire and attract the next generation from all corners of society.
- Design topic specific activities for national awareness months, weeks, and days (Black History Month, Women's History Month, LGBT History Month etc.)
- Establish an EDIA Discussion Forum or Steering Group representative of the entire community to come together and discuss these barriers and propose ways to address them.

### **3 - Working with others.**

A more diverse and inclusive geoscience community cannot be realised solely by the Society. Connecting and partnering with other like-minded groups and organizations is essential to achieving our vision of a thriving and equitable future. Working with others maximises the effectiveness of EDIA initiatives across the community.

#### ***Deliverables***

The Society will:

- Map existing partners and partnerships. Conduct an EDIA related stakeholder mapping exercise and identify where gaps exist, thematically or geographically, and research where new partnerships could be established to fill these gaps.
- Collaborate with our partners to articulate a common vision on how promotion of EDIA will enhance the community. Develop an EDIA specific engagement plan to use with current and potential partnerships.
- Learn from, and share with, our partners the insight, knowledge, and tools to advance our collective aims progressing EDIA throughout the Earth science community.
- Use and share the Society's appropriate media platforms when required for EDIA purposes, including the website, social media accounts, Geoscientist magazine, online & hybrid conference/event platforms etc.

### **4 – Champion equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility**

The Society envisions a diverse and inclusive community that empowers and enables everybody to engage with and benefit from the science, ensuring that all are equitably included and valued. The Society will be a leader in the community, promoting and encouraging inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, enabling all to engage with and benefit from the science.

#### ***Deliverables***

The Society will:

- Raise awareness, throughout the community, of the benefits of EDIA and evidence for them. Ensuring that they are communicated effectively.
- Develop an EDIA communications strategy to formalise the way in which we convey our message to the community.
- Ensure that all Society staff, trustees, and volunteers are made aware of the importance of EDIA.
- Create opportunities for staff and volunteers to get involved in our work.
- When possible, EDIA themed training will be sought/developed and offered to all staff and Society Trustees.
- Publicise the ways in which staff and the wider membership can contribute to our EDIA work. An EDIA specific contact us page will be placed on the website to direct interested parties.