



ASTP
A World of
Knowledge
Transfer



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit

Adapted for Europe

**Guidance and Resources to Establish Best
Practices in the Knowledge Transfer Field**



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Foreword

The landscape of global innovation demands a thoughtful integration of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles. Standing at the nexus of academia, industry, and government; Technology/Knowledge Transfer Offices (T/KTOs) are stewards/custodians of innovation uniquely positioned to influence the broader ecosystem of research, development, and commercialisation. In the long term, this toolkit could be used to outline strategic imperatives designed to embed EDI principles into the operational, strategic, and cultural fabric of T/KTOs.

Most T/KTOs operate within environments that historically have not fully represented the breadth of talent and creativity across all demographic groups. Challenges include underrepresentation of women, minorities, and other marginalised groups in patenting, commercialisation, and leadership roles within the sector. Additionally, implicit biases and structural inequalities often influence decision-making processes, from patent filing to entrepreneurship support, thus perpetuating existing disparities.

The European Union (EU), distinguished by its rich cultural diversity and commitment to inclusivity, faces a growing need to consider Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) practices across its member countries. The proposed EU-based EDI Toolkit is designed to equip T/KTOs and other stakeholders across the EU with the resources necessary to initiate EDI related actions frameworks that promote inter-country collaboration, and harness the full potential of our diverse ecosystem.

Recent assessments reveal varied stages of EDI adoption and implementation across EU nations, largely influenced by differing legal frameworks, cultural norms, and historical contexts. Some countries exhibit advanced EDI integration in academic and business sectors, whereas others are in nascent stages. This disparity presents a unique opportunity to establish a cohesive, EU-wide approach to EDI in T/KTOs that harnesses diversity while promoting shared goals and standards.



The EDI Toolkit is not just a means for enhancement but a critical tool in leveraging the full spectrum of Europe's diverse capabilities. By providing a structured yet flexible approach to EDI, the toolkit aims to lay a foundation for inclusive excellence that drives local, regional, and EU-wide innovation. Implementing EDI initiatives as recommended by this toolkit should impulse K/TTOs to get closer to the forefront of diversity-led technology development and commercialisation, setting a global standard in equity, diversity, and inclusion.

T/KTOs are uniquely positioned to shape a future where EDI are not only integrated but celebrated as drivers of innovation and growth. By implementing EDI based initiative, T/KTOs can contribute significantly to building a more equitable and inclusive innovation ecosystem. We invite all stakeholders, T/KTOs, academic institutions, innovation units and industry leaders, to support the adoption and operation of our toolkit.



The Importance of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Innovation

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are critical drivers of innovation, as they bring together a rich variety of perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Granting equal opportunities matters not only for fairness and social justice, but also for improving economic outcomes and performance in research and innovation ([Trattnig, 2021](#)). When organisations prioritise EDI, they create an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute, regardless of their background. This inclusive culture fosters creativity and allows for a broader range of solutions to emerge, leading to more effective and innovative outcomes. Diverse teams are often better equipped to identify and address complex challenges, as they can draw on a wider array of insights and approaches. By embedding equity and inclusion into the innovation process, teams not only enhance their problem-solving capabilities but also ensure that the solutions they develop are more relevant and accessible to diverse populations. In this way, EDI is not only a moral imperative, but a strategic advantage in driving sustainable and impactful innovation.



Inclusive companies are 1.7 times more likely to be **innovative leaders** in their field ([Bersin, 2019](#))



Diverse teams make better decisions than homogenous teams 87% of the time ([Solomons & Polonskaia, 2024](#))



When people feel a sense of **belonging**, they are more likely to take risks and share ideas ([Brimhall, 2018](#))



Innovation would **quadruple** if women, minorities and individuals from low-income families became inventors at the same rate as men from high income families ([Bell, 2019](#))



Objectives of this Toolkit

Technology/Knowledge Transfer Offices (T/KTOs) are uniquely positioned in the innovation ecosystem to play a pivotal role in influencing change that can help make technology valorisation, and entrepreneurial activities more inclusive.

The objectives of this toolkit are to:

- Promote inclusion and awareness to create an equitable community reflective of today's world.
- Encourage dialogue to inspire members to bring EDI values to their personal and professional interactions.
- Share best practices, data, guides, and resources to help ASTP, knowledge exchange professionals, and others in the European knowledge transfer ecosystem to advance their EDI efforts.
 - *Taking into account the regional diversity within the European ecosystem*
 - *Taking into account specific challenges for knowledge transfer, such as (but not limited to) diversity in recruitment for clinical trials, bias in artificial intelligence, health equity across the world, etc.*

In a future version of this toolkit, we aim to generate a tool to assist implementation of these activities that can be shared with ASTP's community.

This ASTP EDI toolkit was inspired by the AUTM EDI toolkit, and adapted with a focus on the European ecosystem. ASTP's toolkit, is most suitable for Europe-based knowledge transfer practitioners, their collaborative partners and stakeholders . Innovation is global, despite this fact, implementation of best practices in one region may not be necessarily the same in other geographical regions. Therefore, this toolkit is not meant to replace other existing toolkits, but is recommended to be used alongside them.

“The goal is to build an innovation ecosystem that works for everyone.
We invite you to join us in this mission.”

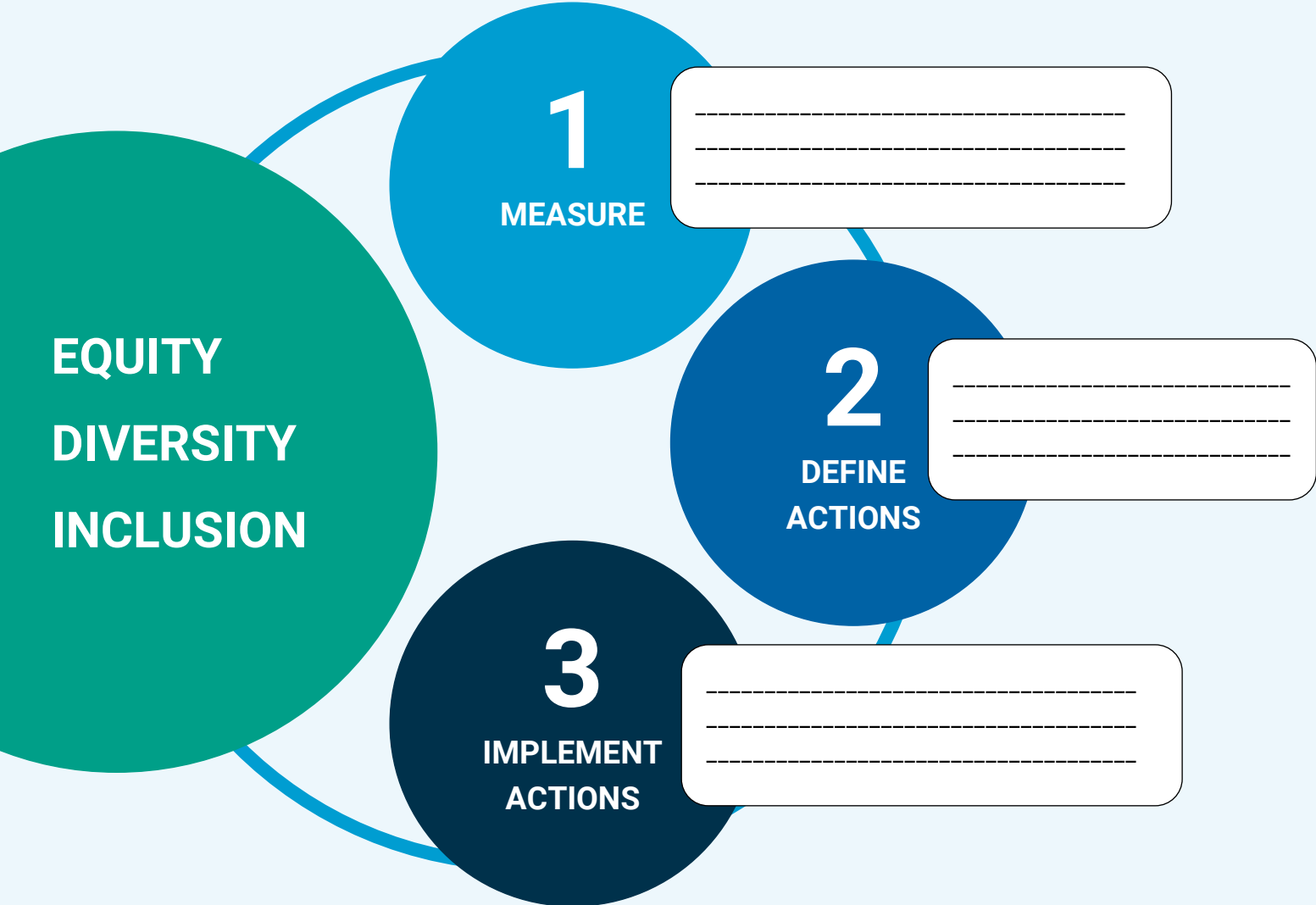


How to Use the Toolkit

Addressing EDI is a continuous process that influences many policies and practices. This is a living document that will be updated regularly by a working group associated with the ASTP EDI Special Interest Group.

This toolkit is an open resource: if there is anything that you'd like to see added to these pages, or if you have any other ideas and suggestions, please do get in touch via email: edisig@astp4kt.eu

Our EDI Toolkit user group will provide feedback and share best practices. In order to embrace the European diversity, we highly encourage people from different regions in Europe to contribute.



A data-driven approach to EDI

Once you are aware of the importance of EDI in innovation, and the role that the knowledge transfer office can play, you may wonder where to start on a journey to implement an EDI strategy. The figure below describes a cycle of a data-driven EDI-approach, whereby you first measure where you stand (see chapter 2 “Measuring impact”), then define actions/activities based on those measurements, and finally implement those actions. In the next cycle, you would measure again to assess the impact of your implemented actions, and potentially identify additional issues to address.

1. Understanding Bias

When measuring how you are doing in terms of diversity in your KTO office, or in the population of researchers that you work with, you may observe patterns that suggest inequality. Some of the inequality in the demographics may be due to different types of bias. It is therefore good to understand these.

- **Implicit bias** refers to attitudes, prejudices, and judgments that we unconsciously hold about people or groups. People who genuinely believe in fairness, equity and equality can hold unconscious biases that can lead them to react in ways that are at odds with their values. These unconscious biases can affect the hiring and promotion choices that we make.
- **Structural bias** refers to the ways that systems and institutions have been designed to benefit one group over others. Examples are the gender pay gap and health inequities.

Remember, we all experience bias—it's a natural part of how our brains process information and make sense of the world. While biases help us make quick decisions, they can also lead to unintentional judgments or actions that may not align with our values. Recognising that bias is normal allows us to approach it without shame, but



it's equally important to be aware of these biases so that we can consciously challenge them and make more fair and informed decisions.

As a result of the type of data that organisations typically capture with respect to diversity, most of the data that is found in Europe referring to diversity often refers only to gender rather than other protected characteristics such as race, religion or belief, and disabilities among others. For a more detail description on these characteristics please refer to the 14 characteristics mentioned in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights and the 9 protected characteristics defined in the UK's Equality Act. Please consider the other characteristics when designing EDI-focused activities within your ecosystems with a view to address needs beyond gender.

2. Measuring Impact

Before designing an EDI strategy, it is important to first assess your current status to then identify how to direct your action. A good starting point is to understand the diversity of your population, as well as any patterns that emerge, for example with career progression or when moving through the impact creation pipeline.

Questions you can ask are:

What is the population of my Knowledge Transfer Office?

What is the turnover of people – are there people who feel like they do not belong?

What is the population that the KTO works with: who submits Invention Disclosure Forms, who are inventors on a patent application, who are the founders/board of directors of start-up companies emerging from the institution?

If you have collected an understanding of the baseline demographics of your office and the people you work with at your institution, you can measure over time whether your EDI strategy has a positive effect.



3. Implementing or Expanding EDI Strategy

As you begin to develop or expand your EDI strategy for your organisation, it is helpful to understand where in this journey you are. Our maturity model provides guidance by breaking down EDI efforts into 5 different levels of maturity.

When you start measuring the diversity and turnover of your population, it may become apparent where potential pain points lie. In that case, actions can be developed and implemented to address that point. However, it could also be that a first baseline measurement does not point to one clear focus for action, but rather raises more questions than it answers.

As a source of encouragement and discussion, this EDI toolkit will be updated frequently to show examples and case studies to draw inspiration from.

Specific examples/ case studies:

- Research funding
- Valorisation (examples: health equity, socially responsible licensing)

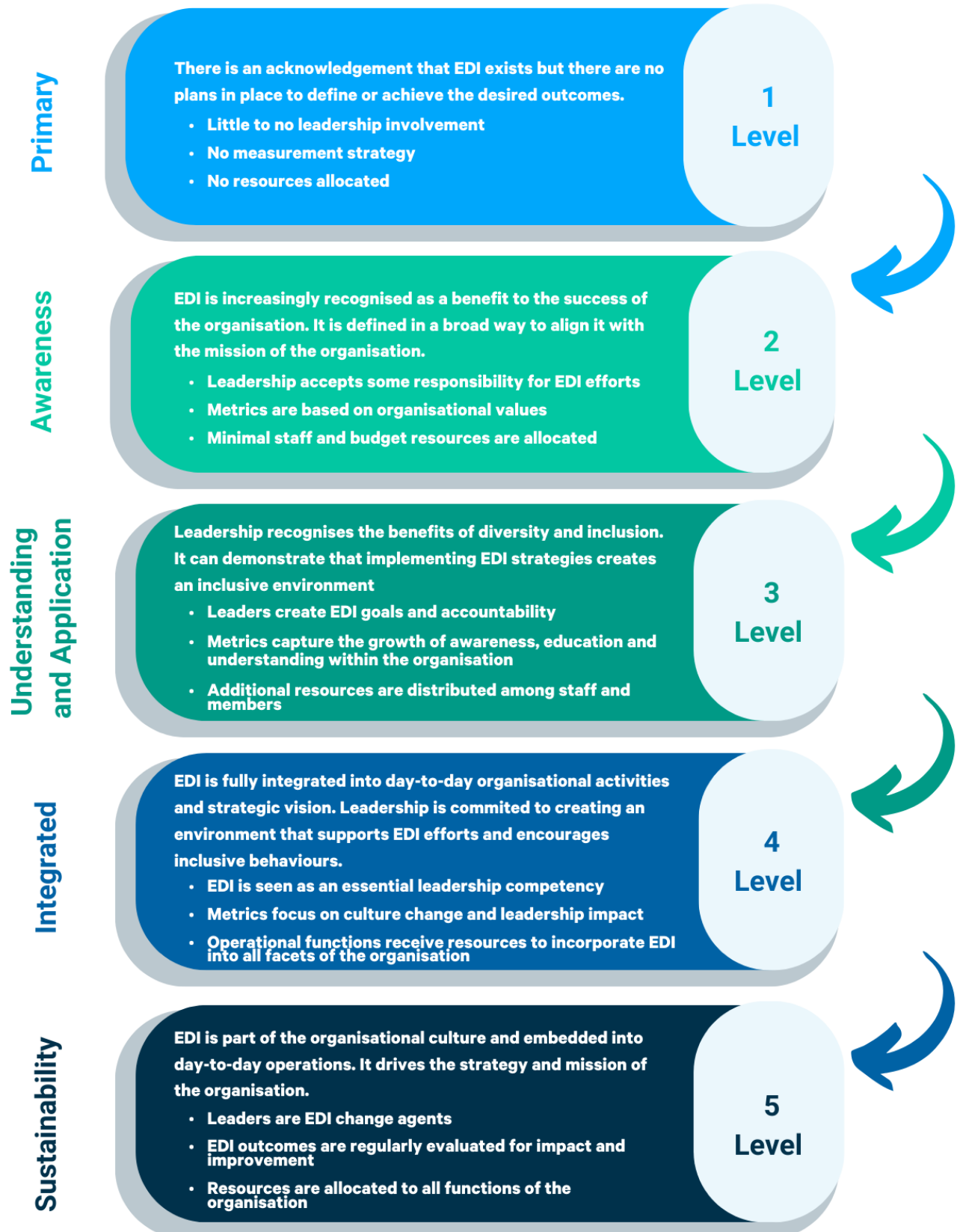
Modern innovation (examples: clinical trials, artificial intelligence, ATMPs).



EDI Maturity Model

Roadmap for KTOs' EDI Strategy

Source: [AUTM EDI Toolkit - Guidance and Resources to Establish Best Practices in Tech Transfer](#)



Data protection and GDPR

As many of the activities relate to monitoring progress and implementation of EDI, these involve recording personal data. For this reason, it is important to take a moment and talk about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

GDPR is an EU Regulation that sets out the rules for processing personal data to provide individuals with fundamental rights and autonomy over how their data is stored and used. It is very important to emphasise that compliance with the GDPR is a legal requirement.

When processing data, you have to do so according to the following seven protection and accountability principles as outlined in the GDPR:

1. **Lawfulness, fairness and transparency** — Processing must be lawful, fair, and transparent to the data subject.
2. **Purpose limitation** — You must process data for the legitimate purposes specified explicitly to the data subject when you collected it.
3. **Data minimisation** — You should collect and process only as much data as is necessary for the purposes specified.
4. **Accuracy** — You must keep personal data accurate and up to date.
5. **Storage limitation** — You may only store personally identifying data for as long as necessary for the specified purpose.
6. **Integrity and confidentiality** — Processing must be done in such a way as to ensure appropriate security, integrity, and confidentiality (e.g. by using encryption).
7. **Accountability** — The data controller is responsible for being able to demonstrate GDPR compliance with all of these principles.

Of special relevance to EDI activities is the special data category defined in GDPR. This category refers to personal information that is of a sensitive nature; such as



gender, race, political beliefs and sexual orientation; and where its misuse could interfere with an individual's fundamental rights or open someone up for discrimination. Processing personal data falling in this category must be taken into special consideration, for this reason we advise to consult an expert on GDPR and data collection when capturing data in any of these special categories.

Keep in mind that our toolkit has been developed as a guide to implement EDI related activities, and this should not be taken as a one-size-fits-all blueprint. In terms of working with personal data, we strongly recommend each K/TTO consults its national guidelines to ensure that all EDI-related activities. Of special sensitivity are those activities involving data collection or personal information, make sure these are in line with your applicable local data protection laws. Our SIG aims to provide an exchange platform where different K/TTOs share relevant information in relation to their regional data protection laws.

More info: <https://gdpr.eu/what-is-gdpr/>

Benchmarking: it will be very informative to benchmark your data against relevant external data. Sources of benchmark data may include: your university's EDI office, AUTM EDI Survey, EDI related data collected by your organisation in the past. Please be aware that T/KTOs are quite unique small organisations, which may make it difficult to find benchmark data.



Fostering Inclusion and Psychological Safety

In T/KTTOs where innovation and collaboration are critical, fostering an environment that promotes inclusion, belonging, and allyship is essential. Ensuring psychological safety for minorities within our ecosystems is crucial to unlock the full potential of diverse teams and drive successful commercialisation of technologies.

Inclusion in T/KTTOs means more than diverse hiring practices. It involves active awareness of diversity from all individuals to ensure that inclusive values are considered in daily operations and decision-making processes. This ensures that all team members, particularly those from minority groups, not only participate but are also heard, respected, and valued. An inclusive environment fosters a sentiment of belonging, which is fundamental for creativity and motivation. T/KTTOs should strive to create spaces and mechanisms through which everyone can express their identities and ideas without fear. This will enhance team cohesion leading to more innovative outcomes and better work practices.

Encourage your team members to become an effective ally in the workspace. Allies play a crucial role in cultivating inclusive workplaces where all employees, especially those from minority groups, feel valued and supported. Here's an individual can be an effective ally:

Educate Yourself: Take the initiative to learn about the challenges that different minority groups face. Understand the historical and systemic factors that contribute to these challenges.

Listen Actively: Pay attention to the experiences and concerns of your minority colleagues. Listening involves more than just hearing words; it requires empathy and a willingness to understand perspectives that differ from your own.



Speak Up: Use your voice to challenge discriminatory practices or comments that marginalise colleagues. Speaking up can also mean ensuring all voices are heard in meetings or discussions, especially those which might otherwise be overlooked.

Advocate for Inclusive Policies: Work towards implementing policies that promote equity and inclusion. This can include support for flexible work arrangements, anti-discrimination training, and equitable hiring practices.

Support Professional Development: Encourage and support the career advancement of minority colleagues through mentorship, sponsorship, or simply by recognising and promoting their achievements.

By adopting these practices, you can contribute to creating a workplace environment where everyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to succeed and feel that they belong.

By embedding these values into their core practices, T/KTOs not only enhance their organisational culture but also increase their effectiveness in driving forward technological advancements. Institutions must diligently work to ensure that every team member feels a sense of belonging and security, paving the way for, improved mental health in the workspace and contributing to the generation of greater innovations.



Other Toolkits and Resources

- [AUTM EDI Toolkit - Guidance and Resources to Establish Best Practices in Tech Transfer](#), published by AUTM in 2022.
- [EDI Toolkit for Researchers](#) by Newcastle University.
- The [EDI Toolkit](#) website, developed to present tools based on lectures and handbooks provided by [Karin Grasenick](#) and the Deliverables developed for the [Human Brain Project](#) (HBP), in close collaboration with the [Diversity and Equal Opportunities Committee](#) (DEOC) of the HBP.
- The European Commission's [Gender Equality in Research and Innovation](#), a part of the European Commission [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), which sets out the Commission's broader commitment to equality across all EU policies.
- [Toolkit on the Use of EU Funds for the Integration of People with a Migrant Background](#), published by the European Commission in 2018.
- [Equality, diversity and inclusiveness at the European University Institute \(EUI\)](#), the leading institute in Europe dedicated to social sciences and humanities.
- [European Commission Guidelines on Improving the Collection and Use of Equality Data](#), published in 2018.
- This seems like a more practical guide on how to collect data under GDPR: <https://www.considerati.com/publications/diversity-inclusion-gdpr.html>
- [The Pronoun Guide](#) by [GLSEN](#), a US-based national network of students, families, educators, and education advocates working to create safe schools.
- [Guidance for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) and [EDI strategy](#) by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).



Glossary

Ally	a person who is not a member of a marginalised or disadvantaged group but who expresses or gives support to that group.
Belonging	everyone is treated and feels like a full member of the larger community, and can thrive.
Diversity	recognition and value of all individual's uniqueness. The condition of being different or having differences. Differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, health, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, religion, physical size, education level, job and function, personality traits, and other human differences.
Equity	<p>refers to the fair treatment, access of opportunity and advancement of all individuals regardless of their background characteristics.</p> <p>Fair treatment for all while striving to identify and eliminate inequities and barriers.</p>
Gender	the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that society considers "appropriate" for men and women.
Inclusion	is the active and intentional effort to create an environment where all individuals are welcomed, respected and valued. bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.



LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans and Queer or questioning, the plus symbol stands for all the other identities that are not covered by the first 5 letters.
Neurodiversity	when neurological differences are recognised and respected as are any other kind of human differences or variations. These differences can include Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Spectrum, and Tourette Syndrome.
Sex	the classification of male or female based on physiological and biological features.
Valorisation	the process of creating value from scientific knowledge, by making it suitable and/ or available for economical and/ or social exploitation and to translate it into innovative products, services, processes and new business to benefit society & public health.





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