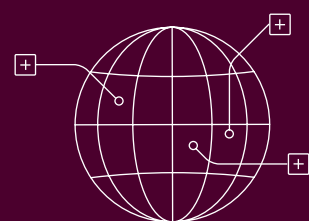# LSHTM Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-26

LONDON SCHOOL of HYGIENE &TROPICAL MEDICINE

I. Introduction

This strategy harnesses the momentum of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine's previous Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2021-2023 and plethora of EDI capital across LSHTM to address both remaining and new challenges.

LSHTM's mission:

Our mission is to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide; working in partnership to achieve excellence in public and global health research, education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice.
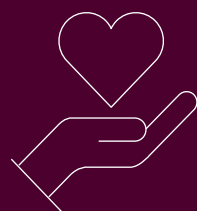
LSHTM's vision 2032 & values:

Our vision is for a more healthy, sustainable and equitable world for everyone. This vision will guide our activities as we pursue our overall mission. Our values – to act with integrity, embrace difference, work together and create impact – underpin the mission, provide purpose and direction, and express our expectations of behaviour of everyone at LSHTM.

II. Approach

We aim to provide an inclusive research, education and working environment reflected through a community that everyone feels a part of, which is safe, respectful, supportive and enables all to reach their full potential.

To achieve this, we commit to the following guiding principles:

Embedded: Addressing EDI issues at School level, recognising the interconnected nature of policies, practices, and cultural norms.

Intersectional: Acknowledging and addressing the intersections of multiple identities and experiences, such as race, sex, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status.

Coordinated: Ensuring that EDI considerations are integrated across all aspects of LSHTM's operations, including research, education, and administrative functions, and has leadership accountability.
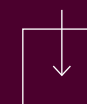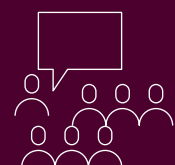
Integrated: Promoting a holistic approach that aligns EDI initiatives with LSHTM's overall mission, values, and strategies; simplifying, coordinating and streamlining various EDI initiatives across the school to avoid duplication of efforts.

Contextual: Accounting for the specific contexts and needs of different units, such as the Medical Research Council (MRC) Units in the Gambia and Uganda, national and international contexts, and different staff and student groups, such as distance learning staff and students, ensuring EDI efforts are tailored accordingly.

Empirical: Informing decisions based on evidence and data-driven insights and embracing continuous learning and improvement, by engaging and consulting with stakeholders across the school including our various EDI committees, networks, and external benchmarks such as Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter and the HR Excellence in Research Award.

III. Goals

Communications and Awareness:

To ensure all members of LSHTM understand how EDI applies to their context and feel empowered to engage in EDI best practice through increasing knowledge, awareness and having access to revamped EDI training provision. Focus on improved communication, both in relation to timely engagement and regular and accessible updates.

Equitable Research Partnerships and Collaborations:

To continue efforts to date, continuing to reflect on structural and interpersonal barriers and extending focus to the experience of all stakeholders engaged in research, including research participants.

Policies and EIAs:

To ensure policies and decision making are meaningful, straightforward to navigate and that EDI considerations are built in from the outset rather than perceived as a belated tick box exercise. Additionally, ensuring policies and decision making are robust against ever evolving legal and regulatory frameworks.
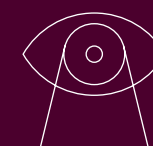
Culture:

To increase transparency, accountability and trust in line with the LSHTM value 'act with integrity'. Develop inclusive leadership capacity across all leadership and managerial levels to enhance and maintain a culture of inclusion and belonging, with an expectation to role model and foster EDI good practice within their spheres of influence.

Dignity and Respect:

To build on and revitalise efforts related to bullying and harassment, including increasing support for anyone wishing to disclose, while extending to address power imbalances more explicitly. An added focus around disagreeing well, to support staff and students to engage in constructive challenge and openness around diversity of thought.

Evidence base (data):

To equip groups, networks, leaders, and individuals to deliver on EDI action plans that enable LSHTM to progress its EDI journey, supported by data and continuous learning.
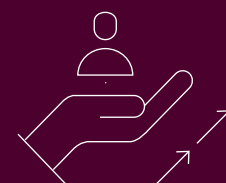
### Resource and recognition:

To ensure appropriate resourcing, recognition and continuity for EDI work and contributions, including support for staff and student networks and addressing workload inequities to ensure all staff can engage meaningfully in EDI work.
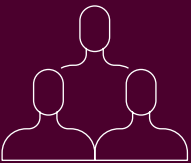
Student diversity gaps (decolonising):

To continue work on decolonising the curriculum and efforts to explore LSHTM's colonial history.
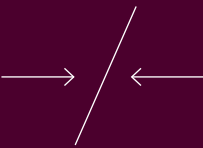
Staff diversity gaps:

To continue work on closing staff diversity-related gaps (or inequities) and increase transparency in decision making around recruitment, promotions, staff experience and progression. Review of different staff groups to ensure equitable experiences are universal and consistent across LSHTM e.g. security, catering and distance learning staff.

Student diversity gaps (widening participation):

To continue work on closing student diversity-related gaps (or inequities) in admissions, experience, attainment and progression using positive action initiatives where appropriate.
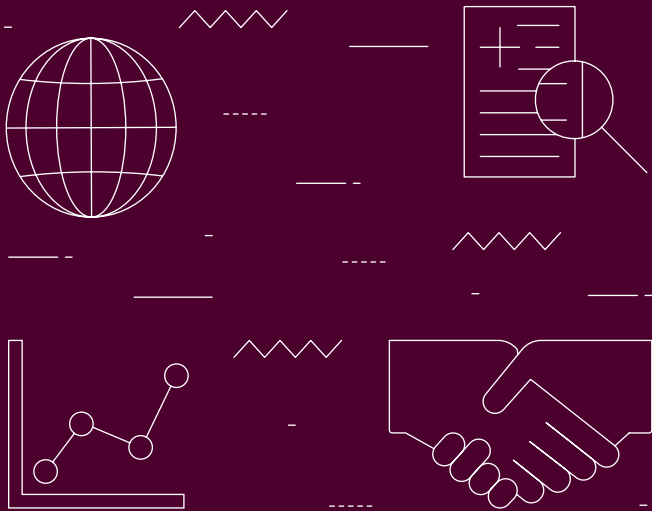
An action plan will be developed to address these goals, whilst aligning against other EDI action plans in circulation. This approach will minimise duplication of effort, siloed working and loss of EDI capital. committees, networks, and external benchmarks such as Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter and the HR Excellence in Research Award.

Definitions

Below are definitions of key terms related to our equality objectives and compliance efforts.

Access and engagement

Working with both other educational institutions (including schools and universities) and departments within LSHTM to provide educational opportunities that encourage all students, irrespective of their background and experiences, to apply for and complete studies at university, specifically at the postgraduate level.

Anti-racism

Anti-racism is proactive action or strategies against racism. It recognises systemic racism and the oppression of marginalized groups and that a neutral non-racist stance does not go far enough. Rather being anti-racist acknowledges privilege and systemic or structural barriers and involves conscious efforts and actions to tackle racism.

Decolonising

Decolonising higher education can be understood in different ways and can include both the curriculum and university structures more broadly. It can be described as an ongoing process which seeks to transform, through reflection as well as action, structures which were built on a foundation of racism, colonialism, and exclusion.

Diversity

"Diversity is the presence of difference within a given setting" (General Assembly, 2019).

Equality

"Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristic" (The University of Edinburgh, 2019).

Equity

While the concepts 'equality' and 'equity' both promote fairness, equality focuses on treating everyone the same regardless of need, while equity recognises the existence of systemic social inequalities, privileges and the need for actions to proactively reduce, if not remove, institutional structural and cultural barriers to equal opportunity and inclusion.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about creating an environment that has the necessary structures to ensure that every individual, regardless of their characteristics and background, has what they need to thrive personally and professionally.

Intersectionality

Further, the importance of intersectionality has been increasingly discussed.

"It's basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts." Crenshaw, 2020

Micro-aggressions

"Commonplace behaviours or aspects of an environment that signal, intentionally or unintentionally, to someone from an under-represented group and/or a group perceived to have less power, that they do not belong, or they're not welcome." (Professor Binna Kandola)

Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence is the term for when someone's brain processes, learns, and/or behaves differently from what is considered 'typical', Some neurodivergent conditions include: Dyslexia, Dyspraxia (also called Developmental Coordination Disorder, or DCD), Dyscalculia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity

Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) sometimes referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These conditions very often co-occur and many symptoms overlap. (The Royal College of Nursing)

Neurodiversity

"Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits." (Harvard University)

Positive Action

The positive action provisions in the Act allow employers to take action that may involve treating one group that shares a protected characteristic more favourably than others, where this is a proportionate way to enable or encourage members of that group to:

· overcome or minimise a disadvantage

· have their different needs met

· participate in a particular activity

This is called taking 'positive action'. The positive action provisions are exceptions to the usual requirements of discrimination law that prevent those with a particular protected characteristic being treated differently, either better or worse, from those without that same characteristic. Without the positive action exceptions, taking action that deliberately and overtly advantages those with a particular protected characteristic over those without it would normally be unlawful under the Act. There are some other limited exceptions, which are explained in the Statutory Code.

Positive action in the workplace - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Privilege

"Unearned access to resources (social power) that are only readily available to some people because of their social group membership; an advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by one societal group above and beyond the common advantage of all other groups. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it." (The National Conference for Community and Justice).

Protected Characteristics

A protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 is a personal attribute which is illegal to discriminate against. The defined protected characteristics are:

· Age: reference to a person in relation to their age group, whether by reference to their specific age or a range of ages.

· Disability: a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

· Gender reassignment: when a person is proposing to undergo, is going or has undergone a process (or part of a process to reassign the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

· Marriage and civil partnership: a person who is married or has a civil partner.

· Pregnancy and maternity: refers to the period from pregnancy (or expecting a baby), breastfeeding (if applicable) and 26 week period after giving birth.

· Race: includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

· Religion or belief: refers to any religion, philosophical belief or lack thereof.

· Sex: refers to whether a person is legally defined as a man or a woman, as designated at birth.

· Sexual orientation: refers to a person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same, opposite or either sex.

LSHTM recognises that diversity encompasses and goes beyond protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act (2010) and should include everything that makes us unique, from our backgrounds and experiences to our personalities and ways of thinking. This includes for example, socio-economic status, transgender identity, caring responsibilities or being a care leaver.

EDI Roles and responsibilities

Role		Responsibilities
Council (and committees of Council)/ with specific remit within People, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.		Governance – overall responsibility to ensure LSHTM has an integrated and proactive approach to EDI, providing external insight and expertise.
Director and senior leadership (Executive Team).		Visible leadership and accountability - role modelling LSHTM values and proactively advancing EDI across their spheres of influence.
Central EDI team: providing internal expertise, guidance and support. School EDI Committee.		Strategic Oversight - planning, development, implementation and monitoring of EDI.
MRC Unit EDI Committee.	Equality action groups (Gender Equity Taskforce, Race Equity Taskforce, School Research Forum).	
Deans and Directors/ Heads of Departments Faculty EDI Committees.		Embedding into faculty strategic planning and professional services - day to day awareness, promotion, implementation, faculty focused actions.
Staff and student networks.		Acting as a critical friend /raising concerns/ awareness raising.
Individual action- staff, students, stakeholders.		Emphasis on collegiality, proactively increasing own EDI knowledge, embedding EDI practice within own work and demonstrating LSHTM values.