

Supplementary Written Evidence Submitted by Imperial College London (DIV0081)

This submission is made on behalf of Imperial College London and outlines the series of measures the College has taken to address challenges faced by underrepresented groups. Complementary evidence is also being submitted by Imperial researchers involved in cross-institutional efforts aimed at improving diversity and equal access in academic research and industry.

Summary

- Imperial College London's mission is to achieve enduring excellence in research and education in science, engineering, medicine and business for the benefit of society. Imperial is one of the world's top universities with the greatest concentration of high-impact research of any major UK university and the only major UK university to teach exclusively STEM courses at undergraduate level.
- Imperial has undertaken a series of measures to address challenges faced by underrepresented groups, guided by our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy](#), which ensures inclusive values are at the core of all the College's activities. To support the pipeline of talent into STEM roles, we are also taking action to improve the access and participation of students from underrepresented groups and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at Imperial

1. [A recent report](#) published by the APPG on Diversity and Inclusion in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, showed that the STEM workforce is less diverse than the wider workforce. These challenges are persistent across science and wider society alike, and Imperial is no exception to this. Our community of students, academics and researchers, administrators and technicians and service and support staff is tremendously diverse, even if it is not yet fully representative of society at large.
2. Tackling the global challenges of the future, such as climate change, emerging infectious diseases and the opportunities of the data revolution, [will require](#) a truly diverse, creative approach. As a world-leading research university, Imperial already benefits from the varied talents of our international staff and students, and also through collaborations and partnerships all over the world. We are clear that for Imperial to be at the forefront of this effort, we will need to [draw upon the talents](#) of staff and students who come here from all backgrounds and from all over the world.
3. Our community has work to do to ensure that everyone can participate to find solutions to these challenges, and to harness the full potential of all. We are committed to doing that. In 2017, the College appointed its first Assistant Provost (EDI), established an executive EDI Strategy Group, headed by the Provost and an EDI Forum with a broad and representative membership – building on work undertaken in previous years. The College has also had a Deputy Director of Organisational Development and Inclusion since 2018, heading up EDI issues across the staff group and leading on the creation of the right tools, capability and environment for everyone to achieve their potential.
4. Published in 2018, our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) has guided our approach with clear actions, progress indicators, timescales, action owners and regular evaluation of progress. It commits the College to:
 - integrate equality, diversity and inclusion into all management processes - with specific training for leaders, nurturing of talent from underrepresented groups and incorporating consideration of these values in the design of research projects that have a direct impact on people (for example technologies to help people with health conditions or impairments).

- integrate equality, diversity and inclusion into the student experience.
- take positive action to improve the opportunities and experiences of under-represented groups, especially women, and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, LGBTQ+ and disabled staff and students.
- reduce the incidence of bullying and harassment.
- gather and publish data to [monitor our progress](#).
- collaborate internally and externally to develop good practice.
- be open to dialogue and challenge on our work on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Access and the student experience

5. Improving the diversity of the STEM pipeline of talent right through the education system will be essential to addressing the underrepresentation of particular groups in STEM roles.¹ The College has set ambitious targets within its [access and participation](#) plan to improve the admission and retention of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented groups, such as narrowing gaps in entry rates for disadvantaged students, increasing entry rates for Black students, and reducing gaps in non-continuation between disabled students and students with no known disability. We are making progress across these.
6. Amongst our initiatives to widen access and participation for students from underrepresented backgrounds is the Imperial College London [Mathematics School](#). Scheduled to open in Autumn 2023, it will accept sixth form students taking maths and further maths, alongside a range of other subjects, with a focus on attracting more female, ethnic minority and other underrepresented students in STEM. The School is a partnership between Imperial and Frontier Learning Trust, a new Academy Trust which also includes Woodhouse College. Pupils and teachers will get the chance to work with some of the world's leading mathematicians, as well as current Imperial students, to improve social mobility and diversity in STEM. Our [Outreach Seed Fund for Recruiting Black Students](#) supports students at the College to develop and deliver Outreach initiatives targeted at engaging Black UK students with our research and education programmes to inspire and support the next generation of Black UK students to make a successful application to the College.
7. The College has launched two new Presidential scholarships to attract more students from Black heritage backgrounds at both [undergraduate](#) and [masters](#) level. As part of this initiative, we have also introduced new Presidential bursaries for our Undergraduate Research Opportunity Placement (UROP) scheme specifically for students of Black heritage.
8. Our [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#), published in 2017, is focused on the needs of students, who make up about 70 per cent of our university community and are drawn from local, national and international populations. Currently being implemented, this strategy sets out how placing diversity and inclusion at its centre will make our teaching more responsive to our students' diverse needs, by directly addressing bias and increasing the relevance and appeal of the curriculum. The strategy also details how we will identify and remove barriers to access and full participation in education at Imperial, and how we will foster a culture and curriculum of 'inclusive excellence' that engages and values diversity.

¹ For example, research by the Department for Education [has shown](#) that proportionately female pupils at Key Stage 4 were less likely to rank a STEM-related subject first for enjoyment (32% compared to 59% of males) and were less likely to consider themselves to be best at a STEM subject (33% compared to 60% of males). While the gender gap in A level awards for some STEM subjects has improved, there remain [significant gaps](#) in subjects like Maths and Physics.

Cross-College EDI initiatives

9. The most visible components of wider cross-College EDI work are schemes that provide external benchmarking of our efforts. These include
 - the [Athena SWAN awards](#) to support and transform gender equality (which operate at College and departmental level). Every department at Imperial has a departmental-level award, except our newest department which is in the process of applying. The College holds an institutional Silver Award in the Athena Swan Charter, of which it is also a founding member, demonstrating our commitment to supporting women in their STEM career progression.
 - the [Race Equality Charter](#) to reduce institutional and cultural barriers for ethnic minority staff and students. Imperial has become a member following the commitment in the EDI Strategy and has been awarded a Bronze Award in the Autumn of 2021 – we are one of a small number of UK universities to hold this charter mark.
 - the [Stonewall Workplace Equality Index](#) that supports organisations to be fully inclusive of LGBTQ+. The college has progressed in the Index ranking and is seeking continuous improvement through a dedicated action plan.
 - the College's status as a Disability Confident Employer. Imperial has been designated as a [Disability Confident Leader](#), the highest level of the Disability Confidence scheme, demonstrating our commitment to recruitment, retention and development of people with disabilities.
10. The College's [EDI Centre](#) offers a range of diversity and inclusion training throughout the academic year, aiming to raise awareness of key diversity and inclusion topics, and to ensure Imperial's staff are able to apply and embed these values in their work. The extensive array of staff development courses includes programmes that are specifically targeted at women [Academic Women's Programme \(AWP\)](#) and [\(Springboard\)](#), at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff ([IMPACT](#)) and at disabled staff ([Calibre](#)),
11. In terms of recruitment, we are increasing the ethnic diversity of appointment panels, especially for senior roles and we have implemented a gender de-coding tool which identifies hidden bias in language in recruitment materials. In 2021, the College introduced a new Pay Review framework that strengthens the governance around the processes, ensuring equity and consistent application of achievement pay review awards.
12. The College is regularly publishing its gender and ethnicity pay gap information. The data from 2021 show that the pay gaps are smaller than they were in 2020, which is a positive sign that we are moving in the right direction. However, we continue to work to find ways to [close the gaps further](#). Faculties also create local Gender Pay Gap Action plans identifying and addressing specific issues. We are continuing to review and model data to identify actions that will have the maximum impact, building on our Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter action plans.
13. We are also supporting parents and carers through carers guidance, parental leave, nursery provision, and family-friendly timing of College events and Department committees.
14. Our recently launched [Provost's Visiting Professor \(PVP\) Programme](#) has been established to improve the diversity of our community by bringing to Imperial leading academics who will contribute to the community through scholarship, teaching and programming aligned with their research. The annual programme, which is designed to recruit academics from Black-heritage and other underrepresented backgrounds, will host up to four new academics for between six and 12 months, with salaries and some travel costs covered by the College.

Institutional culture

15. We have developed Imperial Together to connect all of our important initiatives around cultural change and to reinforce that it is everyone's responsibility – all staff and all students – to help drive a positive culture, turning individual actions into collective change. We are helping build a

community where everyone feels supported to thrive and give their best and are determined to eliminate destructive interactions from our working culture, developing instead the kindness and mutual support which underpin the best teams. This work responds to wider recent changes in the world, including the pandemic, and also builds on the 2016 [independent review of the College's institutional culture](#). It includes:

- Work to define our [Values and Behaviours](#) and actions resulting from the [Working Together Task Group](#) report.
 - the roll-out of [new digital tools](#) for reporting unacceptable behaviour.
 - the roll-out of [Active Bystander training](#).
 - the launch of [Imperial's Reverse Mentoring scheme](#)
 - For students, regular internal and external surveys of their experiences help to ensure that their voices are heard. Our students are represented on the main College and Departmental Committees, and the Learning and Teaching Strategy involves them as key partners in curriculum development and pedagogic transformation.
16. The College is also increasingly aware of the importance of mental wellbeing for its staff and students. A number of coordinated efforts have been made to tackle this challenge across the College. Volunteer Mental Health Champions now help to raise awareness of mental health wellbeing at departmental level, while nearly 300 trained [mental health first aiders](#) around the College can now provide initial frontline support. The Student Union has also introduced a network of student wellbeing representatives who can relay important feedback from students to departments as well as signposting students to any relevant support services.
17. The College [marks and celebrates](#) a number of equality, diversity and inclusion events throughout the year and our [EDI Seed Fund](#) offers £10,000 each year to [implement new ideas](#) about how we can do things better by people and groups within the College. Students may also be interested in the [Outreach Seed Fund for Recruiting Black Students](#). Aligned with the Learning and Teaching Strategy our [Excellence Fund](#) grants funding to projects seeking to embed EDI in the curriculum and student experience.

Research culture

18. Imperial is committed to research excellence, supported by a culture of integrity, good governance and best practice that encourages courageous research with a global outlook. Our [recent work on our research culture](#) includes the development of a resource toolkit to help equip staff in embedding good EDI practice in recruiting to and running their research groups.
19. The 2015 Richardson review on the [Application and Consistency of Approach in the Use of Performance Metrics](#) enshrined the principle that profile of activities - including, for example, research, teaching, mentoring and citizenship - should all be recognised in a thoroughly evidence-based way in hiring and promotion decisions at Imperial. Work to implement this review is ongoing and interacts closely with the action plan following our institutional culture review set out above.
20. Imperial has been a signatory of the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) since 2017. This commits the College to ensuring that we will *not* consider journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, in assessing the research achievements of staff or candidates for recruitment or promotion. Instead, we are determined to ensure that our procedures are grounded in appropriate evidence and fully contextualised.

Further recommendations

21. We recognise and welcome the importance UK Research and Innovation is placing on research culture and diversity. We believe that specific funding schemes targeted at nurturing diverse STEM talent would be beneficial.
22. The ongoing independent review of UKRI places should put sufficient focus on how research funding practices can best support equality, diversity and inclusion in STEM.
23. Imperial is committed to changing how we measure success in research, moving away from a narrow focus on metrics such as output of academic papers and the amount of grant funding achieved in recognition of the negative effect this approach can have on inclusion. [A recent paper](#) co-authored by Imperial academics for the Research on Research Institute has examined this issue from the point of view of how research itself is funded, and how research cultures can be more open, inclusive and impactful. The European Commission has also recently published [a report on reforming research assessment](#) and how this can be implemented, which could be considered as helpful guidance in this area.
24. Similarly, recent work at Imperial's Centre for Higher Education Research and Scholarship has examined our education through an EDI lens: the [Supporting the Identity Development of Underrepresented Students \(SIDUS\) project](#) is a two-year study funded by our [Excellence Fund for Learning and Teaching Innovation](#) and aimed at promoting inclusion and supporting success for STEMM students from underrepresented groups at the College. Building on [earlier identity work on the educational strategies of high-achieving non-traditional university students in post-1992 universities](#), it explores the lived experiences of STEMM students from underrepresented groups and informs College work to maximise their participation which could serve as useful guidance at wider levels.

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