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(DIV0093)

Ethnic Minority Participation in UKRI Processes: Evidence from Six UKRI Research Councils over Five Years.

Summary

- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is the UK's largest research funder, with an annual budget of approximately £8 billion. The under-representation of ethnic minorities in UKRI decision-making processes and among successful grant winners have been the subject of recent discussion^{1 2}.
 - The allocation of UKRI research funds is typically achieved through peer-review processes administered by UKRI Research Councils (RCs). RC committees play pivotal roles in this process.
 - The evidence presented here represents the first detailed and comprehensive account of ethnic minority participation in UKRI RC decision-making. The information derives from six RCs, about 14,000 committee places in 1,337 committee meetings, across five financial years. The data were provided following two Freedom of Information requests to UKRI.
 - There were four main findings:
 - Data aggregated over time and ethnic minority categories show that ethnic minorities have been under-represented in RC committees. Over any given year, for any given RC, committee places taken up by ethnic minority participants ranged from 3% to 13%.
 - The inclusion of Black participants has been particularly low. In one RC, there were *no* committee attendees who disclosed their ethnicity as Black over the five-year period. Representation of ethnic minorities has tended to improve only slowly, if at all, over five years.
 - Across six RCs, over five years, about half of all committee meetings contained *no* participants who disclosed their membership of an ethnic minority.
 - Guidance on inclusive committee-building appears to be inconsistent across UKRI, tends to focus on gender, and does not mention ethnicity in most cases.
 - A set of recommendations is made to improve UKRI's approach to diversity and inclusion decision-making structures and processes.
1. **UKRI and grant-awarding processes:** UKRI is the UK's largest research funder, with an annual budget of approximately £8 billion³. Most of this budget is allocated through funding schemes administered through UKRI RCs, most predominantly supporting research in STEM. UKRI RC evaluation committees are tasked with applying quality

¹ <https://knowledgeispower.live/add-your-name/>

² <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-uk-research-councils-2021-8-black-academics-hit-out-at-ukri-s-lack-of-public-reply-to-open-letter/>

³ <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/what-we-do/our-budget/>

control to the funding process in various ways⁴. Their decisions are pivotal. UKRI grant capture is a significant achievement and is typically career-changing for successful applicants. Invitations to participate in UKRI committees also provide opportunities for career advancement because they represent recognition of significant research experience, and seniority in one's research field. It is important that committees are diverse, that their processes are inclusive, and that their collective decision-making is as free from bias as possible.

- 2. UKRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** It is notable that the draft UKRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy mentions a commendable commitment to be “open, transparent, and inclusive” and that they have made it a priority to “make inclusion a sustainable and business as usual practice within UKRI”⁵. Indeed, UKRI and its constituent RCs have made some significant progress recently in making transparent the success rates of grant applicants⁶. Because these data reveal that grant success rates have been persistently lower for ethnic minority researchers than for White researchers, it is important to consider the possibility that biases in UKRI decision-making structures and processes are embedded in the system. The proportionate contribution of ethnic minorities to UKRI activities is an important principle in its own right, but beyond this, redressing imbalances to achieve a proportionate contribution might serve to minimise the impact of bias in decision-making.

It is generally good practice for any large organisation to audit the composition of its own structures and check that processes are working as they should. It has been known for some time that ethnic minorities appear to be under-represented, and sometimes even completely absent, from some UKRI governance structures. In 2018 it was reported that just five out of 57 appointed RC board members were from Black or ethnic minority backgrounds, and that “AHRC and BBSRC fare particularly badly, each with a 100 per cent White British line-up”⁷. Individual RCs have occasionally published some figures relating to the ethnic composition of its committees⁸ but some commitments to do so have not been met. In 2016, BBSRC's Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion⁹ committed to “publish annually diversity data for applications to and membership of BBSRC Council, advisory and peer review bodies”, but these data don't appear to have been published. Public commitments to transparency need to be met for the research community and others to have confidence that organisations are genuinely committed to change. Data releases relating to decision-making structures have been partial and inconsistent across RCs, and have typically placed all individuals that belong to ethnic minorities into one category.

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-310321-Principles-of-Assessment-and-Decision-Making-V2.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-draft-for-consultation/ukri-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-draft-for-consultation/>

⁶ <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-data/>

⁷ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ukri-criticised-appointing-all-white-research-council-boards>

⁸ <https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/edi/epsrc-peer-review-participation-diversity-data-to-2020/>

⁹ <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/documents/equality-diversity-inclusion-action-plan-pdf/>

3. Data: The data presented here represent the first detailed, organised and comprehensive picture of ethnic minority participation in UKRI RC decision-making structures. The information derives from approximately 14,000 committee places and 1,337 committee meetings that took place between financial years 2015/2016 and 2019/2020, inclusive. The data were requested through two Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to UKRI¹⁰.

I record here my thanks to UKRI staff who have met and corresponded with me, worked with me to understand the details of my request, and have combined a large quantity of data across very disparate datasets in different organisations. This was a significant undertaking.

Data were provided for the following RCs:

- Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Research England (RE)
- UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF) Scheme

Data from Innovate UK and the Science and Technology Facilities Council were omitted from FOI responses to avoid invocation of Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. Data pertaining to the Councils and Strategic Advisory bodies associated with RCs were not provided on the basis of exemption from Section 20(4). Nevertheless, it is important that UKRI finds ways in which to report this information transparently, particularly in relation to UKRI leadership roles.

Data relating to AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, MRC and NERC committee membership are considered together in this report, given the broad similarities between their funding schemes, committee structures and operating procedures. Information about RE and the FLF Scheme are provided in the original FOI releases for transparency, but not considered further since one is cross-council and both differ in major respects from the other RCs.

The data fall into three categories:

- (i) The numbers of committee places taken up by people in different ethnic categories, reported in two ways:
 - (a) Aggregating over ethnic minority categories so that data can be disaggregated annually over a five-year period, to reveal trends over time (table 1).

¹⁰ [FOI2020/00242](#) and [FOI2021/00376](#).

- (b) Aggregating over time so that data can be disaggregated across ethnic categories to understand the representation of different ethnic minority categories (table 2)
- (ii) The number of committee meetings at which there was no individual present that disclosed their membership of an ethnic minority, by year and RC (table 3).
- (iii) Written committee building guidance issued to UKRI staff.

Aggregation and Disaggregation.

No analytical approach is complete unless it considers the heterogeneity of the populations it examines. The work here considers multiple ethnicities because previous work in other areas shows that exclusion impacts some ethnicities much more than others. The failure to consider ethnicities separately can mask large and significant impacts on particular populations. However, sub-dividing the data into increasingly refined sub-categories eventually runs the risk of revealing personal information about particular individuals, so an appropriate balance needs to be struck between aggregation and disaggregation.

It is important to recognise at the outset, rather than as a footnote, that the work presented here is still incomplete because it focuses on ethnicity without taking an intersectional perspective¹¹. Many belong to multiple minorities and live at the intersections of ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. They experience marginalisation that is worse, and qualitatively different (e.g. gendered racism), compared with those who do not. UKRI needs to continue the work started here by understanding their own data in an intersectional context¹².

There is an important caveat. Although the data reported in the FOIs show that ethnic minorities who self-reported their ethnicities were under-represented or even completely absent from some processes (see below), there might have been additional participants who do belong to ethnic minority categories, but whose ethnicity is not identified and fall into 'Unknown' or 'Not disclosed' categories. Although the actual numbers of ethnic minority individuals is likely to be higher, it is not clear whether or not the percentages of participants in different ethnic categories would change significantly.

3. Findings

- (i) A recently commissioned report for the Royal Society^{13 14} (Joyce and Tetlow, 2020) shows that in 2018/2019, 18.7% of STEM academic staff were from ethnic minority groups, and this varied considerably across disciplines ranging from 7.5% (Veterinary

¹¹ <https://equatescotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Women-in-STEM-report-2.pdf>

¹² <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/if-not-now-when-promise-stem-intersectionality-twenty-first>

¹³ <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/publications/2021/trends-ethnic-minorities-stem/>

¹⁴ <https://royalsociety.org/-/media/policy/Publications/2021/trends-ethnic-minorities-stem/Ethnicity-STEM-data-for-students-and-academic-staff-in-higher-education.pdf?la=en-GB&hash=22B252EFA4A87B0D869BE288F7EF724F>

Science) to 33.1% (Engineering and Technology). Table 1 shows that across six RCs and the five-year period considered, 8% of committee places were taken up by committee members who disclosed their membership of an ethnic minority. There was considerable variation across research councils and years (range: 3% [NERC, 2015/2016] to 13% [BBSRC, 2017/2018]). In one extreme case, there were so few (1-4 individuals; [AHRC, 2015/2016]) that the data were suppressed for data protection purposes. In most RCs, the general trend has been a small but steady increase over time. UKRI will need to work to routinely examine and publish such data, and establish an appropriate baseline against which to compare, and indeed this is specified as a priority in the UKRI draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy¹⁵.

Research Council	Ethnicity	#					%						
		2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	All Years	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	All Years
AHRC	Ethnic Minority	..	20	10	10	25	65	..	7%	6%	5%	13%	7%
	Not disclosed	30	30	20	20	25	125	16%	12%	12%	14%	13%	13%
	Unknown	5	25	..	..	5	35	4%	10%	..	3%	..	4%
	White	150	185	140	125	140	740	79%	71%	80%	78%	73%	76%
	Total	190	260	175	160	190	975	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BBSRC	Ethnic Minority	10	15	35	30	30	120	4%	5%	13%	11%	11%	8%
	Not disclosed	25	20	10	20	15	90	7%	6%	4%	7%	5%	6%
	Unknown	20	15	..	..	..	35	5%	4%	..	..	..	2%
	White	290	285	240	235	220	1270	84%	85%	83%	81%	84%	83%
	Total	345	340	290	290	265	1530	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
ESRC	Ethnic Minority	35	55	30	50	55	225	8%	9%	9%	6%	10%	8%
	Not disclosed	50	50	30	70	45	245	10%	8%	8%	8%	7%	9%
	Unknown	35	85	30	100	80	330	8%	14%	8%	12%	14%	12%
	White	355	410	270	605	400	2040	75%	69%	75%	74%	69%	72%
	Total	475	600	360	820	580	2835	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
EPSRC	Ethnic Minority	95	80	100	85	105	465	10%	8%	10%	8%	12%	10%
	Not disclosed	80	90	80	95	55	400	9%	10%	8%	9%	7%	8%
	Unknown	70	100	100	90	75	435	7%	10%	10%	8%	9%	9%
	White	685	685	750	785	605	3510	74%	72%	73%	75%	72%	73%
	Total	925	960	1025	1055	840	4805	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
MRC	Ethnic Minority	20	20	20	20	20	100	9%	10%	10%	10%	11%	10%
	Not disclosed	25	15	15	10	10	75	12%	7%	7%	5%	6%	8%
	Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	White	165	170	165	160	145	805	79%	82%	84%	84%	83%	82%
	Total	210	210	200	190	175	985	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
NERC	Ethnic Minority	15	35	25	35	25	135	3%	5%	4%	5%	6%	5%
	Not disclosed	40	75	55	50	35	255	8%	11%	9%	8%	9%	9%
	Unknown	65	120	105	80	30	400	12%	17%	17%	12%	7%	14%
	White	420	460	445	495	315	2135	78%	67%	71%	75%	78%	73%
	Total	540	690	625	660	405	2920	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
All	Ethnic Minority	175	225	220	230	260	1110	7%	7%	8%	7%	11%	8%
	Not disclosed	250	280	210	265	185	1190	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%
	Unknown	195	345	235	275	185	1235	7%	11%	9%	9%	8%	9%
	White	2065	2195	2010	2405	1825	10500	77%	72%	75%	76%	74%	75%
	Total	2685	3060	2675	3175	2455	14050	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1: Numbers and proportions of committee places taken up, by ethnicity and by year. Data supplied in UKRI FOI2020/00242. Composition of committees by Research Council, over financial years 2015/2016 to 2019/2020 (1 April and ending 31 March). UKRI advises that members in each category have been rounded to the nearest value of five and their respective percentage. Percentages have been rounded to zero decimal places and may not sum to exactly 100%. Null values (..) arise because data are suppressed in line with section 40(2) of the FOIA, and reflect one to four individuals. Note that data were compiled on a per-meeting basis, so if the same member has sat on more than one committee meeting per year, or across years, their data has been included for each meeting. The 'All Years' column aggregates data across the five years. White cells are original data, as supplied in FOI. Grey cells are additional calculations applied to the original data.

(ii) The Royal Society report mentioned above shows that that in 2018/2019, 13.2% of STEM academic staff were Asian and 1.7% were Black. Table 2 shows data aggregated across years and so allows disaggregation across ethnic minority categories, revealing evidence of significant under-representation. Individuals who disclosed their ethnicity as Asian were under-represented across RCs, ranging from 3% (NERC) to 7% (EPSRC). Individuals who

¹⁵ "Priority 4A: advancing how EDI data are collected, used and analysed", in <https://www.ukri.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-draft-for-consultation/ukri-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-draft-for-consultation/>

disclosed their ethnicity as Black¹⁶ represented 2.1% for ESRC, but were only 0.34% to 0.63% for all other RCs in which Black individuals participated. **One of the most striking findings is that there were no committee members who disclosed their ethnicity as Black over a five-year period on any BBSRC committees.**¹⁷ For comparison, what would these percentages look like if individuals from eligible populations were selected into committees without bias (randomly)? UKRI will need to calculate appropriate baselines using its information on committee and population sizes, and interpret comparisons as part of its work. Whatever the estimated baseline figures, in an unbiased committee building process, it seems unlikely that out of 1525 BBSRC committee places none would be filled by individuals who disclosed their ethnicity as Black over a five year period.

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Not disclosed	Other	Unknown	White	Total
AHRC	50	5	10	125	0	45	740	975
BBSRC	60	0	10	90	55	35	1275	1525
ESRC	125	60	45	235	0	330	2040	2835
EPSRC	355	30	55	400	20	430	3510	4800
MRC	65	5	20	75	5	0	810	980
NERC	95	10	30	255	0	400	2140	2930
Total	750	110	170	1180	80	1240	10515	14045
AHRC	5	1	1	13	0	5	76	100
BBSRC	4	0	1	6	4	2	84	100
ESRC	4	2	2	8	0	12	72	100
EPSRC	7	1	1	8	<1	9	73	100
MRC	6	1	2	8	1	0	82	100
NERC	3	<1	1	9	0	14	73	100
Average %	5	1	1	9	1	7	77	100

Table 2: Numbers (rows 1 to 7) and proportions (rows 8-14) of committee places taken up by members who disclosed their membership of one of five ethnic categories (Asian, Black, Mixed, Other or White), or did not disclose their ethnicity ('Unknown' or 'Not disclosed'). Data were supplied in UKRI FOI2021/00376, and were the same data provided in UKRI FOI2020/00242, aggregated over the five-year period. UKRI advise that members in each category have been rounded to the nearest value of five and their respective percentage proportions rounded to whole values, so proportions may not add up to 100%. They further advise that the same individual may contribute data to more than one committee meeting, and therefore might contribute more than once to each cell. Information relating to less than five individuals was withheld as personal information under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Where there are no members within a category, a count of zero is included. Grey cells are additional calculations applied to the original data.

(iii) In response to FOI1, UKRI reported **the fraction of UKRI committee meetings at which no individual attended who disclosed their membership of an ethnic minority.** This measure reveals the relationship between actual participation in UKRI processes and the ethnicity of decision-makers. It relates to committee meetings, not individuals, and asks about the numbers absent from processes rather than those present. Hence, there are no data rounding requirements, and there are no omissions required to protect individual identities where numbers in some groups may be very low. **Table 3 shows that a large fraction of committee meetings contained no committee members who disclosed their membership of an ethnic minority. Across RCs and years, this amounted to 51%.** There

¹⁶ Table 2, rows 8-14, column heading for Black ethnicity; percentages re-expressed to two decimal places.

¹⁷ UKRI have advised that members in each category were rounded to the nearest value of five, and their respective proportions were rounded to whole values. Those relating to less than five individuals were treated as as personal information and so withheld under section 40(2) of the FOIA. However, where there were actually no members within a category, a count of zero was used. **Any 'zeros' in rows 1 to 7 of Table 2 are not the result of rounding non-zero values.** This reflects true zero values.

was considerable variation across STEM RCs. MRC reported the lowest proportions of such meetings, indicating higher levels of inclusivity (7% in 2015/2016 to 22% in 2017/2018). NERC appeared to have the highest proportions of such meetings, and by this measure the least inclusivity, ranging from 63% in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, to 74% in 2015/2016. By comparison, the non-STEM AHRC had the highest proportions of all, between 44% in 2019/20 and 92% in 2015/2016).

Research Council	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	All years
<i>Meetings with no self-identified ethnic minority members / total meetings</i>						
AHRC	36/39	20/28	22/31	19/25	12/27	109/150
BBSRC	12/17	7/17	3/15	5/15	5/15	32/79
ESRC	15/29	8/29	10/19	16/43	17/43	66/163
EPSRC	72/137	67/113	68/128	66/123	51/103	324/604
MRC	2/27	3/27	6/27	3/27	3/24	17/132
NERC	31/42	31/48	29/43	26/41	22/35	139/209
ALL	168/291	136/262	138/263	135/274	110/247	687/1337
<i>Percentage of meetings with no self-identified ethnic minority members</i>						
AHRC	92%	71%	71%	76%	44%	73%
BBSRC	71%	41%	20%	33%	33%	41%
ESRC	52%	28%	53%	37%	40%	40%
EPSRC	53%	59%	53%	54%	50%	54%
MRC	7%	11%	22%	11%	13%	13%
NERC	74%	65%	67%	63%	63%	67%
ALL	58%	52%	52%	49%	45%	51%

Table 3: Numbers and proportions of committee meetings with no individuals who disclosed their membership of an ethnic minority. Data supplied in UKRI FOI2020/00242. White cells are original data, as supplied in FOI. Grey cells are additional calculations applied to the original data.

These findings prompted requests in FOI2 for more detailed information about committee building processes (information supplied, see point (iv) below). Data on the number of committee invitations to individuals in different ethnic groups was also requested, but only AHRC was able to supply this information because it is not held by the other RCs. This is not considered further.

When interpreting data in Table 3, it is important to form a view on what number of meetings, if any, could be expected to have no attendance from people who disclosed membership of an ethnic minority, based on the numbers of eligible individuals in the various ethnic categories. UKRI will need to form a view of this as part of its work to become a more inclusive organisation. However, by way of example, in 2019/2020, EPSRC ran 103 committee meetings (Table 3) with 840 meeting participants (Table 1). In that year, 12% of participants (Table 1) and 15% of the College of Peer Reviewers¹⁸ (905 individuals eligible for committee participation) identified themselves as members ethnic minorities. In this example, UKRI should consider whether one would expect 50% of EPSRC meetings to have no participation from those who disclosed their membership of ethnic minority groups, if members of every ethnic group have an equal probability of being invited to each meeting.

¹⁸ <https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/edi/epsrc-peer-review-participation-diversity-data-to-2020/>

(iv) Is the low participation of ethnic minorities on committees related to the ways in which they are invited to participate? FOI2 requested UKRI to provide “*any written guidance issued to UKRI staff about the process of selecting and inviting individuals in the FOI [2020/00242] to committee meetings*”, so that one can better understand the basis of committee building. These were provided (see attached). **In committee-building guidance, the ESRC was found to be the only RC to mention the need to consider ethnicity when building committees.** Guidance to AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC and NERC staff mentions the need to balance gender, but does not mention ethnicity. The MRC invites all members to attend every meeting as a matter of routine, so no guidance is issued.

UKRI was also requested to provide the “*median number of invitations to committee meetings issued to individuals over the period in the last FOI*”. It was hoped that this would bring to light how frequently individuals in the different ethnic minority groups are invited to attend. Although AHRC were able to provide this data, it could not be provided by any of the STEM RCs. In all such cases, the information has not been held. UKRI have reported that in some RCs, processes are under review. Also, NERC started collecting these data from February 2021, but data collected between then and the FOI release are not provided.

5. Recommendations

The findings above show evidence of under-representation that has been widespread across RCs and long-standing over a period of at least five years. Yet, it appears to be the case that neither UKRI, nor its predecessor RCUK (formed in 2002), have reported the data, or any coherent and comprehensive analyses. There is also no publicly available, UKRI-wide, evidence-based action plan that aims to rectify the problems revealed in the data (although there are some notable new actions^{19 20} taken by RCs). Approaches to monitor and tackle under-representation appear to be coordinated at the level of individual RCs, rather than being driven by strategic decisions in UKRI.

The following recommendations are made:

- UKRI leadership needs to develop a clear vision of what proportionate representation and inclusion should look like among UKRI decision-makers, coherently across RCs. The development of this vision requires the guidance of stakeholders with lived experience of marginalisation and scholars with specific research expertise.
- The final version of UKRI’s recently published draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy²¹ needs to commit to monitoring, publicly reporting on, and ending under-representation in its decision-making structures, beginning with its leadership teams and including all of its committees. This programme of work also needs to be properly resourced.
- A set of coherent, evidence-based, specific and time-bound actions needs to be developed that aims to understand the causes of under-representation among UKRI

¹⁹ <https://mrc.ukri.org/about/information-standards/equality-diversity/>

²⁰ <https://www.ukri.org/blog/help-us-make-peer-review-more-diverse-and-inclusive/>

²¹ <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UKRI-071021-AddressingUnder-representationUpdate07Oct.pdf>

decision-makers, that increases diversity and inclusion, and uses evidence to check that actions have impact.

- Guidance to staff in all RCs needs to include a requirement to ensure, at the very least, the proportionate participation of ethnic minorities. Adherence to this and other requirements needs to be monitored.
- UKRI should put to actual use the ethnicity (and other) data that it collects relating to its decision-making structures, and do so in a routine, timely and transparent manner.

6. Acknowledgements and Endorsements

I'm grateful to Professor Jackie Hunter CBE (Former Chief Executive, BBSRC)²², the British Neuroscience Association (BNA)²³ and to Dr Arun Verma (intersectionality, inclusion and impact specialist) for various roles in helping to shape the report and for endorsing the content. I'm also grateful to Dr Addy Adelaine for wide-ranging and helpful discussions about equity, diversity and inclusion in UK research.

Author Details

I am Professor of Neuroscience at Royal Holloway, University of London. Prior to this I completed my doctoral and early career training at University College London and the University of Oxford. My research expertise includes brain organisation, the brain mechanisms of learning and decision-making, and the use of functional neuroimaging methods. My research evaluation experience over some years includes core membership of BBSRC Committee A and various international evaluation committees. I have successfully won grant funding from BBSRC. I have governance roles in organisations concerned with STEM (Council Member, Parliamentary and Scientific Committee; Trustee for Research Policy, BNA). I also have experience with equality, diversity and inclusion in STEM and academia (Governance Committee member, Race Equality Charter; Chair of Departmental Athena SWAN Self Assessment Team; nearly a decade of continuous work on Royal Holloway Race Equality Charter self-assessment teams). I also bring to this exercise my identity and experience as an Asian man in academia engaged in STEM research.

²² Letter of Support from Professor Jackie Hunter CBE (Former Chief Executive, BBSRC), appended below.

²³ I'm grateful to Joseph Clift (Head of Policy and Campaigns, BNA), Dr Anne Cooke (Chief Executive, BNA), and Prof. Richard Henson (President, BNA) for their guidance and involvement; www.bna.org.uk.

LETTER OF SUPPORT

Professor Jackie Hunter CBE PhD Hon DSc FBPharmacolS, FMedSci, FRSB, FZSL

Former Chief Executive, BBSRC

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I would like to strongly support this analysis and the recommendations made.

When I was CE of the BBSRC, very early on in my tenure, I initiated more detailed analyses on the make up of the BBSRC's funding statistics and also initiated an equality and diversity strategy for the BBSRC. Subsequently I was then asked to work across all the research councils to deliver a cross council equality and diversity strategy which launched in 2016.

Critical to any initiative of this nature is the provision of data and its use to guide policy and interventions. This evidence report demonstrates the importance of gathering and publishing data with regard to ethnicity. I am sad that it has taken freedom of information requests to obtain the information, rather than it being already published, but am glad that the information existed and was supplied.

It shows a clear need to increase participation from ethnic minorities at all levels of research council processes – from ensuring a proportional application rate through to peer review and research council committee demographics.

I hope the Committee considers the recommendations at the end of the report and finds ways to ensure they are implemented.

Professor Jackie Hunter CBE PhD Hon DSc FBPharmacolS, FMedSci, FRSB, FZSL

Former Chief Executive, BBSRC