Call for proposals and guide to submissions

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2024: The future is now: Building EDI practice for the changing world of HE

6-7 March 2024

Submissions should be made online via the following link:
https://advancehe.smapply.org/prog/edi_conference_2024

Overview
The AHE EDI Conference 2024 will provide space to rethink and refresh our approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion, share our successes, and contribute to a collective discussion about how we are shaping the future of EDI in higher education across the globe by thinking about what we are doing and need to embed in our practice now.

Constant change is a reality of higher education, and our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion needs to keep pace with this change. Evolving new practice to tackle emerging issues, continuing to create innovative solutions to perennial problems, anticipating developments that will affect the nature of our student and staff communities is our constant goal.

The challenges facing HE are varied and complex, and no single approach to tackling them will suit the diversity of institutions in the sector. Curiosity about the wide range of thinking and practice that might inform our approaches, openness to listening to others (other institutions, other countries, other sectors), an engagement with what we learn from marginalised voices and experiences, and collaboration with EDI practitioners from across HE are the tools that will equip us to craft EDI solutions that are relevant, effective and sustainable.

Conference outcomes
In addition to opportunities to hear from a range of interesting speakers and enhance personal networks, this conference offers:

- Horizon scanning: space to reflect on current challenges and to scope what will need attention in the future;
- Practice sharing: a chance to hear from others within and beyond HE about what is working to address inequality and promote inclusion;
- Skills building: a practical focus on developing our expertise as EDI practitioners;
- Collaboration: an opportunity to take part in a creative exercise to shape sector understanding of EDI;
- Problem solving space to trouble shoot and gain feedback from colleagues on works in progress and sticky issues;
- Networking with likeminded professionals for mutual support and peer challenge.

Advance HE has acted as a nexus for thought leadership and research into EDI policy and practice in HE and FE. The underpinning evidence base has been built up by and for the sector and is used to inform the work of policymakers and practitioners. With an ever-growing global community of member institutions and a portfolio of thematic communities with global membership, this conference seeks to promote the learning between individuals with a passion for transforming EDI activity in the sector to achieve real change.

**Conference Themes**

The conference will have the following sub-themes and contributors will be asked to identify which sub-theme their submission supports:

1. **Responding to the changing nature of student and staff populations.** Could include a focus on particular student/staff groups, trends in relation to international students, developments in staffing (employment practices, skills shortages etc.). Most importantly, how are those most affected by inequity experiencing our inclusion efforts? We particularly welcome student voices, and those with marginalised identities doing research in their field.

2. **Creative approaches to enduring challenges.** An opportunity to explore the latest thinking/practice on tackling issues including awarding gaps; under-representation; unacceptable behaviour; gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

3. **Learning from beyond HE.** Examples of innovative EDI practice from outside the sector.

4. **The EDI practitioner skillset.** What are the attributes of an effective EDI practitioner? How are we/can we develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that are needed to lead EDI in HE either from a strategic or an operational perspective? As a core area for growth, what are the current models of and approaches to leadership development that will provide emergent leaders with the skillset to make progressive change. Potential submissions can also consider development for specific staff groups, and building particular skills (for example strategic approaches to Freedom of Speech issues).

5. **Thinking forward.** What are the emerging issues? Where is innovative practice breaking new ground? Where do we want to go from here and what do we need to do to make progress, or identify new priorities? How are we as EDI practitioners evolving?

**Conference structure**

The conference will run across two days with an optional evening dinner and activities on the evening of the 6 March. Delegates can attend the full conference or choose the one day that resonates most with their work, experiences or requirements.

Please note that there will also be an early evening reception for Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter award winners from recent application rounds, these winners will also be offered the opportunity to showcase their work during specific sessions in the conference programme.
Proposals/session type options:
Proposals are sought against any of the five themes above, which will span both days of the conference.

Proposals are welcomed from individuals or teams from across an institution or multiple institutions as well as from students, student unions or other student bodies/groups. Submissions from networks or partnerships within HE or with bodies outside the HE sector are also welcomed to offer the opportunity for delegates to learn from the widest and most diverse range of work, building on the conference theme. The conference aims to showcase a wide and diverse range of work, activities and positive changes with the HE sector. Individuals may submit against more than one session type. Submissions are especially welcomed from presenters with lived experience of protected characteristics or from minoritised groups.

Submissions can be for any of the following session formats. After review we will schedule submissions into 60-minute session slots arranged by theme.

1. Interactive Workshop session (60 minutes)
Interactive workshop sessions engage participants with peer-learning activities and discussions in numerous formats, including round-table learning cafés, debates, crowdsourcing sessions and ‘unconference’ gatherings. This is your opportunity to be inventive in your mode of delivery to achieve optimum engagement and learning. Any presentation elements in this session should not exceed 20 minutes, allowing 40 minutes for discussion or practical activity. Delegates should leave the sessions with practical skills or ideas via which to improve their practice.

2. Walkshop session (60 minutes)
Originally from Norway, a walkshop is a contemporary spin on the traditional workshop, based on research findings that indicate that walking can increase a person’s creative input by an average of 60%. In this session, the presenter will choose a topic and give a maximum of 10 minutes’ introduction to or presentation on the topic. Presenters provide five or six stimulus questions for discussion on cards, and participants are encouraged to walk – or wander – in loosely forming groups, discussing a question and then swapping cards or shifting groups when a line of thought or interaction has run its course. Participants reconvene for 10 minutes at the end of the session to share feedback and ideas. Padlet, or similar technology will be used to capture ideas during the walk.

3. Oral presentation (30 minutes)
Oral presentations should aim to give a brief summary of a piece of research or a project, either completed or still in progress. Each presentation should last for no more than 20 minutes, leaving 10 minutes for questions/discussion. Two oral presentations, with a central theme, will be grouped into hour-long sessions. A member of the Advance HE conference team will facilitate these to maximise audience engagement and ensure good time keeping.

4. Ten-minute thesis (10 minutes)
Building on the idea of the “Three-minute thesis”, the goal of this session is to present your research in an engaging way that attendees can understand. However, presenters only have three minutes to deliver the content and seven minutes for questions. You can think of this exercise as an academic version of an elevator pitch. Five individual sessions will be
scheduled into an hour-long session. A member of the Advance HE conference team will facilitate this session to ensure presenters keep to time.

5. Poster presentation
Posters give an alternative approach for the presentation of current research or new work. Posters should be an eye-catching visual representation of a topic, potentially including graphics, tables, charts, text, and images. Posters will be displayed throughout the conference for informal browsing, with contributors indicating when they will be available in person to discuss their poster.

Posters should be **professionally printed** and brought with you to the conference for display. Only the following orientation and sizes can be accepted:
- Landscape – A1.
- Portrait – either A1 or A0.
- Neither orientation should be smaller than A1 in size.

In addition to the printed poster, presenters are asked to produce both an electronic version of the poster along with a three-minute recorded presentation explaining the key points of the poster and the project behind it. Electronic posters and recorded presentations will need to be submitted in advance to the conference team, and QR codes linking directly to the recording will be displayed alongside physical posters in the exhibition area.

**Submission guidelines**
Submissions should be made online via the following link:
https://advancehe.smapply.org/prog/edi_conference_2024

On accessing this link, you will be asked to **set up a simple account** requiring your name, e-mail address and a password of your choosing.

**Deadline for submission:** Midnight, 30 October 2023

The following provides an outline of the information required in your submission.

1. **Accept Conditions of Conference**

**Privacy Statement**
You will be asked to read and agree to Advance HE’s privacy statement, explaining how we will use and store any data you submit.

**Conditions**
Before submitting a proposal for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2023, please be aware that the following terms and conditions apply. Presenters are required to:

- attend the in-person conference for a minimum of one day to present their session should it be accepted into the conference programme. Please note, presenter places are not free of charge, but are offered at a discounted rate;
- agree to information about themself, their co-presenters, their institution and their session details being promoted externally on the web-based conference programme;
- permit their slide decks and resources from the session being shared with conference attendees;
allow their session to be photographed or videoed during the conference at Advance HE’s discretion;
allow their and their co-presenters’ details (name, email address, institution, biography and Twitter name) being shared with delegates during the conference on the Advance HE’s events app.

You will have to agree to these conditions and storage of data before progressing with your submission.

2. Lead Presenter Details

Contact details
Please include your details as the lead presenter. As lead presenter, all correspondence regarding the session will be sent to you, but not to any co-presenters. It is the lead presenter’s responsibility to share information and correspondence with all their co-presenters.

Your title (Dr, Professor, Mr. etc.), first and last name, institution, job title, e-mail address, mobile phone number, Twitter handle (if you have one) and a short biography should be provided which will be added to the conference app and made available for all conference delegates to view.

Biographies should be no longer than 100 words and should be written in the third person singular. Mobile phone numbers will not be shared outside of the conference administrative team, and will be used to contact you only if we have been unable to get in touch via e-mail.

Before completing this section, you will be asked whether your proposed session includes any additional presenters. Please select the appropriate answer. If you have additional presenters, you will be asked to include contact information (as above) for each additional presenter.

You should only list colleagues who will be attending the conference to co-present your session in person.

3. Session Details

Title of session
Please give your session a name that describes your session concisely and attractively to audiences. On request, the title of your session can be changed ahead of publishing the programme, but as standard, this will be the title used for the programme and all publicity of your session online or on the conference app.

Session Theme Selection
From the drop-down list of five themes, please select the theme that most closely aligns with the content of your session. Details of each theme can be viewed when that option is selected.
**Session type**  
Please select the session types that you would prefer to deliver at the conference (you may choose more than one session type).

Please be aware of the differing lengths of the sessions available:
- Interactive workshop session – 60 minutes;
- Walkshop session – 60 minutes;
- Oral presentation – 20 minutes, plus 10 minutes Q&A;
- Ten-minute thesis – 3 minutes, plus 7 minutes Q&A;
- Poster presentation.

Further details about session types can be found by clicking on the ‘Show more’ button under each session type.

**Session outline**  
Session outlines should be written in full paragraphs. Please remember that information provided in the ‘abstract’ section is not viewed by our reviewers, so it is important to provide background information and possibly repeat information. Outlines should include as much of the following information as possible:
- Brief background information about your project, research or initiative;
- How your proposal links to the overall theme of the conference and the chosen sub-theme;
- Who your intended audience is;
- What impact, take-aways or learning outcomes will your session provide;
- How delegates will be able to implement that learning in their own institutions/practices;
- If a workshop/interactive session: how your session will be delivered, how you will engage participants in interactive activities, and how your session delivery demonstrates originality/innovation;

Outlines should be no longer than 500 words.

**This information will be used in the review process to select and schedule conference sessions.**

**Abstract**  
This section will be used for publicity purposes only to promote your session via the Advance HE website, the conference app and social media. This should set out the aims and objectives of the session and be written in a way that will attract delegates to your session. Abstracts should be no longer than 100 words. This information will not be reviewed or form part of the submission that reviewers will assess when deciding on suitability for inclusion in the conference.

**4. Presenter Requirements**

**Room layout**  
Where possible, session rooms will be arranged in either theatre style for oral presentations or in cabaret style for interactive sessions. If your session has layout requirements outside of these styles, please select ‘other’ and explain your requirements.
Please note that while we will attempt to accommodate each presenter’s preference, it may not always be possible to arrange the rooms in your preferred style due to limitations placed on us by the venue.

**Additional equipment**
As standard, breakout rooms will be supplied with a Windows laptop, a projector and screen. Interactive breakout sessions will also contain flip charts, pens, post-it notes and a variety of other stationery.

For presenters who wish to bring their own laptops, VGA and HDMI adaptors will be available. Where possible, presenters wishing to use Mac laptops or Macbooks should bring an appropriate adapter with them to connect to the projector cables.

If you require equipment in addition to the above list, please state it in this section.

Please be conscious of the limitations of space within venues and try to adapt your sessions accordingly. We will not be able to accommodate sessions that require multiple delegate access to computer terminals/laptops or other specific technical equipment.

**Additional requirements**
If you anticipate having any additional requirements when attending the conference, please make us aware of these here. These may include accessibility, access, or other additional requirements that will enable you to attend and present your session.

Support dogs, carers and assistance staff are welcome at the conference and will not be charged an attendance fee, but please let us know about this by including the details here. A quiet room, prayer room and baby feeding room will be provided throughout the conference available to all delegates.

**Review criteria**
Each proposal is subject to review by a panel of peer reviewers against the following criteria:
- relevance to the conference theme and sub-themes;
- implications of the work for the EDI community;
- clarity of the proposal;
- originality/innovation of the subject matter;
- anticipated interest;
- originality/innovation of the mode of presentation (for workshops/interactive sessions only);
- potential for delegates to be actively engaged.
**Additional information**

**Important dates**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2023</td>
<td>Call opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 October 2023</td>
<td>Deadline for submissions (00:00 GMT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29-30 November 2023</td>
<td>Lead presenters informed of submission outcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 November 2023</td>
<td>Early bird 10% presenter discount opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 December 2023</td>
<td>Lead presenter acceptance of session place</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 January 2024</td>
<td>Early bird presenter discount offer closes</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 January 2024</td>
<td>Deadline for presenters to have booked onto the conference</td>
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<td>21 February 2024</td>
<td>Presentations, electronic posters and recordings to be submitted</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 March 2024</td>
<td>Conference bookings close</td>
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**Presenter Information**

**Presenter availability**

Presenters will be informed of the review decision, and their scheduled time in the conference programme by **30 November 2023**. We are unable to take into account presenter availability when timetabling the sessions, so it is essential that you are available to present your session on either day of the conference, until the specific time and date of your session is confirmed.

**Pre-conference**

Following a successful review of their submission, lead presenters will be informed of the decision and will be asked to confirm acceptance of the offer to present at the conference.

Presenters are required to attend the conference for a minimum of **one full day** in order to present their session and to participate in other sessions throughout the day.

All presenters (including poster presenters) will need to register for the conference by **29 January 2024** and book by 12 January to take advantage of the **10% discounted rate** for presenters.

It is our intention for the conference to be delivered as a full in-person experience and all presenters should prepare to deliver their sessions on site, however, requests to present remotely because of health or accessibility concerns will be taken into consideration.

Contributors will be required to send presentation slides, electronic posters and any recordings to the conference team by **21 February 2024**. This is so that slides and resources can be shared with conference delegates in advance for accessibility purposes, and allow us to pre-load presentations onto laptops in the session rooms.

Details of your session, drawing on information supplied on the submission form, will be published on the Advance HE website.
You may also be invited to blog about your session before the conference to assist with promotion of the event.

Post-conference
Presentations, electronic posters, recordings and abstracts will be shared with conference attendees after the conference has been delivered. Please ensure that permission has been sought for the use of any copyrighted images.

You may also be invited to blog about your session or conference experience after the conference.

Co-presenters and responsibilities
All presenters listed on the submission form should attend the conference and each will be expected to register for the conference if the session is accepted.

Please note:
- All presenters, including co-presenters, need to have booked onto the conference by 29 January 2024.
- It is the responsibility of the lead presenter to pass on all relevant details to any co-presenters, as correspondence in the first instance will be sent only to the lead presenter.
- It is the responsibility of the lead presenter to inform Advance HE at the earliest opportunity of any changes to the session title or content, or of any circumstances that prevent presenters attending the conference that could lead to the session being withdrawn.

Materials and handouts
Presenters are encouraged to provide handouts during sessions to support their presentations or workshops, but please note that Advance HE will not be able to print materials on the presenter’s behalf and if required these should be prepared in advance and brought with you to the conference.

Attendee numbers
We are unable to guarantee exact audience numbers at any single session and this may result in delegates’ attendance being uneven between sessions that are running in parallel.

Accessibility
We will provide presenters with guidance on accessibility and it is expected that presenters adhere to this guidance and also ensure that any presentations and handouts meet Advance HE’s accessibility requirements.

Privacy policy
All the information supplied on the submission forms will be stored by Advance HE in electronic format for the purposes of administration of the conference. Additionally, except where stated otherwise, information supplied in submission forms may be published in the conference app, on the conference website and Advance HE blog pages. All presenters will be required to sign acceptance of the Advance HE event terms and conditions when completing their conference booking form.

Contact us
If you have any queries about submissions for the conference, please contact conference@advance-he.ac.uk