Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Plan
Priorities 2023-2026

Why are we doing this?

As the representative body for environmental science, it is essential that we proactively seek to enhance diversity and inclusion across the sector, act as agents of change, and lead by example for the betterment of our environment, society and economy.

Drawing on diverse viewpoints and experiences ensures we are better equipped to tackle the multidisciplinary challenges encountered in the integrative field of environmental science. To enact change, it is essential that we are representative of the community that we serve. Sustainability at its core requires openness, inclusivity, and collaboration across all communities. It seeks to ensure the natural environment, society and economy are not subject to degradation, depletion, or disrepair.

The environmental sector also recognises that not all impacts are equally distributed. For example, high levels of ambient air pollution often disproportionately affect individuals from minority ethnic or lower socioeconomic backgrounds. To transition to a sustainable society, it is essential we make positive steps to ensure equity for all protected characteristics and socioeconomic statuses. Due to the systemic nature of the issue, change will be needed at many levels to bring about transformative solutions.

Definitions

Diversity	all the visible and invisible differences between people's identities and backgrounds
Disability	according to the Equality Act 2010, a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities
Equality	ensuring every individual has equal access to opportunities
Equity	creating fair access which is proportionate to every individual's needs, ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities
Inclusion	creating an environment in which everyone feels valued
Minority Ethnic	collectively describes all who self-describe their ethnicity as Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other), Black or Black British (African, Caribbean), Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Asian, White and Black African, Other), White (Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Other excluding White British), Arab or any other ethnic group, as established by the Office for National Statistics
Minoritised	any people or groups in society that are made to feel as though they are a minority in a way that is harmful or unfair
Neurodiversity	an umbrella term covering a number of neurodevelopmental conditions including: ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, that affect the way people experience and interact with the world around them
Protected Characteristics	specific aspects of a person's identity protected under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation

Background

The IES has long championed its commitment to the elimination of discrimination and the widening of participation in environmental science and sustainability. For nearly a decade, we have maintained a transparent Equality and Diversity Policy. In 2015, we signed up for the Science Council Declaration of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, which was updated in 2023 and renamed the Declaration on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Since then, we have monitored progress as a professional body and employer for many aspects of the Institution, including our governance, committees, employment, memberships, events, communications and accreditation scheme.

Evidence suggests that the environmental sector does not currently reflect the diversity in society. A 2022 study by SOS-UK, IEMA and NERC showed that "environment professionals" are one of the least racially diverse professions in

the UK, with just 4.81% identifying as Black, Asian or from other minority ethnic groups, compared to 12.64% across all UK professions. The IES membership shows higher diversity than the wider environment profession; in 2022 the percentage of IES members with a UK address from a non-white background was 11.3%. However, the proportion of the UK population aged 16-64 in employment from a non-white background is 14% which means our diversity gap at the end of 2022 was 2.7%, highlighting that action is still needed to be truly representative.

Focusing on charities working in the environment, climate, sustainability and conservation sector, The RACE Report (Racial Action for the Climate Emergency) launched in 2022 to increase transparency in terms of action taken on ED&I and workforce diversity data, with the aim to accelerate progress on diversity and inclusion. A key finding of the 2022 report is that 7% of overall staff in relevant organisations were people of colour (POC) and from racially/ethnically minoritised groups, in line with other research showing the lack of diversity in the sector.

Current Actions
Data collection
Since 2017, we have collected data on Members' gender, ethnicity, disability, and citizenship. The analysis of our data suggests there is an underrepresentation across almost all these groups, including women (in some grades of membership), trans and non-binary genders, ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities.

Reporting
- The IES publishes data on gender, ethnicity, and disability in our Annual Report.
- From 2023 we will report on our administration and organisation characteristics, diversity data for our staff and governance bodies and our actions on equality, diversity and inclusion as part of The RACE Report. Our CEO is an advisor on The RACE Report.

Projects
- Diversity Initiatives – In 2021 the IES launched its first Corporate Partnership Scheme, the Diversity Initiatives. Phase I focussed on understanding the reasons for the lack of ethnic diversity in the environment sector and culminated in the publication of A challenging environment: Experiences of ethnic minority environmental professionals. Phase II of the Diversity Initiatives is being launched in 2023.
- Equator Project – The IES sits on the Advisory Panel for the NERC-funded Equator Project, that developed three evidence-based interventions targeting barriers to ethnic minority participation and retention in Geography, Earth and Environmental Science (GEES) postgraduate research.
- The Royal Society of Engineering and Science Council's Progression Framework 2.0 – As signatories of The Science Council's Declaration on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, we use and evaluate against the Diversity and Inclusion Progression Framework 2.0 for Professional Bodies to plan and evaluate our activities.

Areas of focus
Equity, integrity and trust underpin the core values of the Institution. It is therefore imperative that we operate transparently and publicise our priorities for enhancing representation both internally and across the sector. This includes our efforts to ensure equal opportunities for all by identifying and dismantling barriers which prohibit inclusion. This strategy sets out five key organisational areas of focus between 2023 and 2026:
1. Governance, Committees & Employment
2. Membership & Registers
3. Events & Training
4. Communications & Publications
5. Education & Accreditation

Detailed actions for each priority area are provided in the following sections.

1. Governance, Committees and Employment

The IES is a small organisation which, at the time of writing, employs seven full-time and four part-time members of staff, as well as several external contractors. Our governance structure is a board (Council), with additional sub committees including our Fellowship Panels, Application Review Panel, Remuneration & Nominations Committee, Policy Committee, Ethics Committee, and Audit & Risk Committee.

Within the IES family there are several semi-autonomous communities: the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM), the Community of Environmental Disciplines in Higher Education (CEDHE, formerly known as CHES), and the Foundation for Water Research (FWR), which serve as communities for air quality, environmental education and water respectively. Activities of the IAQM, CEDHE and FWR are determined by their respective committees, subcommittees and technical panels.

Other specialisms within the IES are represented by communities led by a steering committee. Currently, there are communities for Land Condition, Marine & Coastal Science, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Climate Action. There are also two Early Careers Networks linked to the IAQM and Land Condition communities.

All activities undertaken by the communities are covered by IES policies as per the Scheme of Delegation.

Priorities

1. **Implement inclusive and best practice approaches to staff recruitment by end of 2023**
Recruitment and selection processes will be scrutinised against key performance indicators and appropriately adapted to attract minoritised groups within the environment sector, reflecting best practice measures. Depending on the role, actions taken may include adapting the use of language in job adverts, giving clear instructions and signposting to support, using a diverse range of recruitment platforms to increase the visibility of opportunities, operating blind selection processes or applying positive action so that minority candidates are always given an interview, and providing unconscious bias training for those involved in selection. The success of these actions will be monitored and further changes made as deemed necessary.

2. **Set up systems to support and empower a pipeline of candidates to stand for Council, committees and panels to promote inclusivity of minoritised groups by end of 2023**
A number of actions will be taken to encourage candidates from a wide range of backgrounds (including educational), to stand for Council, committees and other groups. This will include: making information on the roles readily accessible, and in formats suitable for disabled and neurodiverse people; sending targeted communications and marketing materials to underrepresented groups; offering additional support mechanisms to people from underrepresented groups that wish to put themselves forward; carrying out research to understand barriers to applying and making changes that reflect this; monitoring the demographics of Council, committee and panel members and considering ED&I when mapping skills gaps; encouraging early careers professionals to get involved in working groups and subcommittees to gain skills; and providing resources for those voting that highlight the value of diversity. In addition, a mentoring programme will be available in advance of elections to provide support and guidance for all considering joining a committee, and to boost confidence for people from minoritised groups to put themselves forward. We will develop processes and documentation to make this a standard procedure, with a focus on inclusivity in delivery of the programme. Our Diversity Initiatives Phase II work will also work to address the pipeline issue in a more systemic way, through encouraging improved diversity in the environment sector as a whole.

3. **Foster an inclusive culture by embedding equity, diversity and inclusion across our activities and processes and provide support for staff and volunteers to maintain an inclusive culture by 2024**
Our Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed and updated to reflect best practice and learnings. To ensure we create a working environment where every individual feels safe, has a sense of belonging and is empowered to achieve their full potential, we will offer dynamic and regular ED&I training for all employees, irrespective of seniority, and signpost training and resources to volunteers to help create this culture. We will also involve diverse voices in organisational decision making where appropriate to support inclusive activities.

4. **Establish the post of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Champion for the IAQM and FWR committees and provide them, and the Council and CEDHE champions, with training and support to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are considered for all programmes of work by 2025**

We currently have an ED&I champion for the Council and the CEDHE committee. Responsible individuals for IAQM and FWR will be appointed to represent their committee internally, leading on equity, diversity and inclusion within the remit of their community. We will seek to appoint professionals with experience in ED&I roles, and/or provide appropriate training. Specific guidance will be co-created with existing ED&I Champions to outline the roles and responsibilities of the post, and this will be thoughtfully designed and backed with adequate human and financial resources. The role may involve helping identify skills, training and attainment gaps in their field; supporting the office in increasing representation in events, publications and communications; and signposting towards appropriate training that can be delivered for their committee and members.

2. Memberships & Registers

The IES offer a range of memberships for environmental professionals at every stage of their career, from Associate to Full Member to Fellow. Student Membership is also available to students on our accredited programmes and Affiliate Membership for environmental enthusiasts, early-career professionals or students studying on non-accredited programmes. Congruent grades, except for Student, are also available for members of the IAQM.

We offer two Charterships, Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and Chartered Scientist (CSci), which are reserved for Full Members and Fellows of the IES. We additionally hold two registers, Registered Environmental Practitioner (REnvP) and Registered Environmental Technician (REnvTech), available to all membership grades.

Priorities

1. **Update guidance and processes around our membership applications to make them more inclusive and ensure they do not exclude those from minoritised groups joining by end of 2023**

Currently our guidance surrounding the application process for new members does not provide additional support and adjustments for those from minoritised groups such as disabled and neurodiverse people, instead taking a reactive approach. By the end of 2023 we will research and implement changes to our guidance and processes that will proactively encourage applications from people from minoritised groups and will follow best practice in terms of accessibility.

2. **Actively encourage underrepresented groups to apply for Charterships, Registers and Fellowship from 2023 to 2025 and evaluate progress**

We will annually monitor demographic data for Charterships, Registers and Fellowship, and confront barriers to representation. This will involve actively researching and approaching individuals from underrepresented groups to encourage applications, conducting drives and targeted campaigns to improve diversity, and offering relevant support mechanisms, such as mentoring. As part of this, we will also provide ED&I training and support to assessors.

3. **Establish an ED&I Action Community to support knowledge exchange between employers in the environmental sector committed to improving equity, diversity and inclusion and the development of best practice in this space, with a focus on taking forward the 'recommendations for employers' in the published report from Diversity Initiatives Phase I by end of 2023**

Underrepresented groups within IES membership include women (at some membership grades), minority ethnic groups and individuals with disabilities. We will establish a new ED&I Action Community and hold regular meetings in accordance with our existing community model for environmental employers. Through this group we will seek to explore the barriers to improving diversity and potential solutions, as well as share learnings from interventions taken. Recommended activities may include, but are not restricted to, targeted events, targeted training programmes,

building policies, adapting communication approaches, developing support networks, and holding roundtable discussions. The Community will help with the delivery and further development of this plan.

4. **Extend current mentoring schemes to build a diverse pool of mentors and offer members from underrepresented groups the option of tailored support by 2024**

Mentoring schemes presently seek whether individuals require support from an individual of a particular gender or who has taken parental leave. This will be extended to facilitate support in professional development, learning or employability for members from underrepresented groups including those who have a disability or are from a minority ethnic background. We will also seek to develop a tailored "Rising Stars Mentoring Programme" through our Diversity Initiatives Phase II which will support those from minoritised backgrounds in their career growth in the sector, with the aim of improving the number of ethnic minority individuals in leadership positions in the sector.

3. Events & Training

The IES holds a varied events programme throughout the year catered to a range of audiences, including members, environmental scientists, graduates and the public. Our events employ a range of formats, such as conferences, discussion meetings, forums, training workshops, webinars and film screenings, hosted both externally and in-house.

Speakers, panel members and chairs for our events are usually identified by volunteer organisers or by IES staff. Individuals are typically selected based upon the relevance of their position, experience or knowledge to the subject of the event. Agency is usually given to the individual on their presentation, content, delivery and any associated documentation.

Venues are generally chosen with respect to cost, location, availability and functionality. Wherever possible we aim to hold events at locations across the UK to facilitate access to a wider audience.

Priorities

1. **Proactively communicate accessibility of venues to potential delegates from 2023 onwards**

Present practice for venue accessibility is reactive and relies on the onus of the delegate to enquire about accessibility. Information will be provided at the point of registration regarding access for wheelchair users; facilities to support individuals with visual, hearing or other mobility impairments; and materials to support neurodiverse individuals and those with specific learning difficulties. A policy to support flexible cancellation will be put in place for disabled delegates. Improving communications around accessibility will also be extended to online events, whereby procedures will be formalised to include details of how the session will be run via the online platform at the point of registration (i.e. how the presenters will appear, whether there will be live captioning available etc).

2. **Develop formal event venue selection criteria which evaluates cost, environmental credentials and accessibility by end of 2023**

Ensuring events are environmentally responsible and accessible to the widest possible audience are key elements of delivering equitable and sustainable events, provided these are reasonable and within the Institution's financial means. Formal criteria will be developed that will provide guidance on choosing venues which consider accessibility and sustainability alongside cost.

3. **Consider equality, diversity and inclusion when selecting speakers for events from 2023 to 2025, and evaluate progress**

Event organisers will be conscientious of creating inclusive events that elevate and value the voices of underrepresented groups. Speakers from diverse backgrounds perpetuate positive messages that specialist subjects are open to all. Reflecting the diversity in membership may not be sufficient as this can reinforce 'who' engages in environmental science. We will strive towards achieving more diverse speaker and chair representation for conferences, panels and webinars, particularly considering gender, ethnicity and disability and seniority. As part of this, we will actively seek speakers from members of our early career networks. For both speaker selection made by

IES staff and committee members, we will develop guidance and inclusive language around how this will be achieved and communicated, taking care that tokenism is avoided. A mechanism will be developed for collecting demographic information of speakers.

4. **Identify barriers for underrepresented groups attending events and training and develop solutions to increase engagement by end of 2024**

Demographic data for event registration and participation will be collected and analysed on an annual basis to monitor attendance and engagement by underrepresented groups, in addition to qualitative data collected about events. Research will be carried out and processes developed to collect data from underrepresented groups regarding barriers to attendance. Solutions to increase participation by reducing these barriers will be developed through consultation with delegates via feedback as well as with staff, specialist communities and through collaboration with other organisations.

5. Communications & Publications

The IES utilise various methods of communication to deliver memberships, services and other charitable aims. Our primary communicative approaches are emails, phone calls and marketing materials; IES, IAQM, CEDHE and FWR websites; social media channels including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube; internal and external meetings, events and webinars with associated documentation; our e-newsletter, ES Monthly; the FWR newsletter; our in-house journal, environmental SCIENTIST; policy responses, reports and guidance documents; blogs and analysis pieces; news stories; and so on.

Regular reports include the Annual Report, Membership Survey and Salary Survey. The environmental SCIENTIST is produced quarterly and distributed in print to all professional members, online to all subscribing members and open access to the public three months after publication. Guidance documents are often developed by working groups contained within our Council, Committees or Communities in collaboration with the Publications team along with other ad hoc reports/publications.

Priorities

1. **IES website to follow best practice in terms of accessibility when redesigned**

Accessibility will be embedded in the redesign of the IES website, and designers will be briefed on making the website accessible for disabled and neurodiverse people. This includes consideration of user experience and journeys, intuitive layout, use of plain language, alternative text for images, font size and style, alignment, etc.

2. **Develop a communication strategy that embeds equity, diversity and inclusion and ensures all staff, contractors, volunteers and authors are appropriately trained by end of 2024**

Through the development of communication guidance documentation, we will encourage all those involved in communications to use inclusive language and images that makes content accessible for disabled and neurodiverse people, and positively represents all communities within our membership and society. Advice will be sought from relevant organisations and individuals from underrepresented communities in promoting positive messages.

3. **Develop a mechanism for monitoring the demographic data of authors of our in-house journal, environmental SCIENTIST, by 2024**

At present, demographic information is not collected for authors of our publications. We will incorporate data collection for the environmental SCIENTIST to ensure varied perspectives, experiences and research are represented. Consideration will be given to gender, geographic location, seniority level and, where possible, ethnicity and disability. Continued research into appropriate and sensitive data collection methods for protected characteristics will be crucial in expanding this priority.

4. **Consider equality, diversity and inclusion when shortlisting authors for our in-house journal, blogs, and reports from 2023 to 2025 and evaluate progress**

Including messaging from authors from underrepresented groups will allow for a diversity of perspectives to be highlighted. After monitoring and reviewing the demographic data of authors, we will strive towards achieving more diverse author representation, particularly considering gender, geographic location, seniority level, ethnicity and disability. We will actively seek contributions from members of our early career networks.

5. **Promote and elevate the work of members from underrepresented groups within our messaging and communications by 2024**

To increase visibility and project positive representations of environmental scientists from diverse backgrounds, we will use our communication channels to highlight professional activities of members from underrepresented groups. As part of this, we will publish resources on our members' career pathways, highlighting the diversity of routes into the sector and opportunities for career progression. We will also consider ED&I in the creation and use of creative assets and marketing materials that are used in our external communications, particularly considering images and language.

5. Education & Accreditation

CEDHE is the collective voice of the environmental sciences and related programmes in higher and further education who play a leading role in the higher education environmental science community and advocate for environmental science within education. CEDHE is an active networking organisation with a membership of 50 higher and further education institutions across the UK and internationally. In addition to its membership offering, CEDHE provide a university accreditation scheme, deliver workshops and influence education policy, teaching and learning outcomes.

As aforementioned, CEDHE serves as the education committee of the IES. CEDHE have a representative on its Committee whose role it is to continually scope intersections between environmental science education and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Priorities

1. **Develop best practice guidance for equality, diversity and inclusion in environmental science education by the middle of 2024**

Questions on equality, diversity and inclusion have been embedded in the CEDHE accreditation framework since 2018 as part of a data collection exercise and became part of the accreditation criteria in 2023. Responses will be analysed to identify best practice and attainment gaps which can be translated into guidance, in consultation with relevant organisations working in this area. Examples of best practice may include, but are not restricted to, inclusive teaching or learning policies, specific awards or endorsements, or reasonable adjustments.

2. **Proactively expand CEDHE accreditation scheme to international institutions between 2023 and 2026**

The current accreditation scheme focuses primarily on UK institutions due to necessary alignment with the ES3 Benchmark Statement. Since January 2023 international institutions need to respond to the ED&I criteria as part of the accreditation process. By expanding our accredited institutions internationally, we can influence the progress on equity, diversity and inclusion outside of the UK.

3. **Organise and deliver training for institutions in enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion in environmental education by 2025**

Using best practice and support from relevant organisations, training will be developed to increase awareness and consideration for equality, diversity and inclusion in environmental further and higher education. This will support institutions in addressing key barriers and attainment gaps and implementing equitable policies and practices.

4. **Develop a specific workstream within our Student Ambassadors initiative to address equality, diversity and inclusion, by 2024**

We will co-design a workstream of activities for our Student Ambassadors to work on to address equity, diversity and inclusion, led by their experiences as well as research and best practice. This may involve outreach and engagement

activities to engage younger audiences from underrepresented backgrounds, activities to influence the culture within higher education and developing training and resources for careers advisors.

5. Highlight the diversity of career pathways available in the environment sector and actively engage with those from underrepresented backgrounds on routes into the sector and the diversity of environmental careers by 2025
We will publish a dedicated webpage on our website focussed on career pathways in the sector, highlighting the diversity of routes into an environmental career. This will include information on both academic and vocational pathways, including apprenticeships, and will seek to amplify the experiences of those from underrepresented communities and promote alternative routes into the sector. Through our Diversity Initiatives Phase II work, we will champion a systemic approach to tackling the issue of ethnic diversity in the sector through dedicated programmes of work targeting minority ethnic groups at different stages of their education and career journeys.

Key Performance Indicators

Benchmarks providing quantifiable and tangible measurements to support monitoring of progress in diversity and inclusion have been developed. The benchmarks we have established so-far refer to disability, ethnicity and gender, which have all been developed in line with UK national standards. These benchmarks are to be used for comparisons only and are not implemented or enforced through quotas.

Disability
According to the ONS 2021 census, 17.7% of people in England and 21.1% of people in Wales consider themselves to be disabled (when asked if they have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more). At working age, this percentage reduces to approximately 11.8%, which is our benchmark for disabled individuals.

Ethnicity
For ethnicity, the ONS 2021 census determined that 81.7% of the population of England and Wales identified as White (either White British, White Irish, White Gypsy or Irish Traveller, White Roma or Other White), with 74.4% of the population of England and Wales as specifically White British. At working age, the proportion of the UK population in employment from a non-white background is 14%, which provides our benchmark for minority ethnic groups. The gap between this and the data from our UK membership represents our diversity gap.

Gender
Gender identity amongst the 16-64 age bracket in England and Wales is 50.8% female to 49.2% male, providing our benchmark. We acknowledge that gender is a spectrum which goes beyond the female and male binary. Of IES members, 0.8% identify as neither male nor female. According to 2021 ONS census data, 0.06% of the over 16s in England and Wales identify as non-binary.

Other protected characteristics
Our current diversity monitoring process is entirely voluntary and not anonymous in its approach. As such, we have decided not to collect data based on religion or sexual orientation at the time of writing and will continue to do so until a suitable means of collecting these data are found. With differing legal statuses on the rights of both religious and LGBTQIA+ communities across the world, we believe the personal risk to our members may be considerable. We will continue to research and engage with these communities and develop our approach to monitoring these protected characteristics to ensure diversity, equity and inclusivity are upheld.