EPSRC EDI and Skills Strategic Advisory Network (SAN)

EPSRC's vision is for the UK to be recognised as the place where the most creative researchers can deliver world-leading engineering and physical sciences research. The UK needs a diverse academic and business workforce with the right skills to maximise the benefits of scientific and technological advances. As outlined in the EPSRC strategic delivery plan 2022 to 2025, world-class people and careers are at the heart of this vision to create an effective ecosystem by:

- delivering essential STEM skills for the UK through investment in people
- championing a research culture where everyone is respected, valued and able to contribute and benefit, embedding equality, diversity and inclusivity in everything we do.

Terms of Reference and Operation

Purpose

1. The Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Skills Strategic Advisory Network (EDI and Skills SAN):

i)   has been convened with the specific goal of providing strategic direction on EDI and skills in the Engineering and Physical Sciences and support the development of evidence-based actions

ii)   exists to provide EPSRC with strategic advice that will assist us to develop, implement and modify plans, and to make appropriate recommendations to the EPSRC Council

iii)   is devised as a flexible resource, enabling EPSRC to obtain advice needed in a timely manner, drawing on a range of perspectives from across our key stakeholder groups

Scope
2. The EPSRC EDI and Skills SAN has been convened with the specific goals of:
    i)   **providing EPSRC with strategic advice** that will support the development, implementation and delivery of evidence-based actions, determining what challenges to prioritise and identify areas where EPSRC is uniquely placed to deliver change in the academic community.

ii) **being a flexible resource**, enabling the EPSRC to obtain the advice they need in a timely manner, drawing on a range of perspectives from across our key stakeholder groups.

iii) **enhancing our understanding of activities in the broader landscape** and how EPSRC can work effectively within a complex landscape of activity. Alerting us to new and emerging areas or opportunities and helping us identify new stakeholders we might work with from across the sector.

iv) **acting as advocates for EPSRC's EDI and Skills approach** and help two-way communication between EPSRC and the broader community.

Membership

3. The EDI and Skills SAN draws membership from across our Strategic Advisory Teams (SATs) and Science, Engineering and Technology Board (SETB), with a maximum of 3 nominations from each advisory group and chaired by a member of EPSRC's Council.

4. Members bring their own expertise and experience of EDI and skills in research to this network, but are required to act as 'generous generalists', bringing a broad strategic view and advising across the breadth of the EPSRC portfolio.

5. Members are required to declare any personal, private, or commercial interests that might conceivably conflict with the interests of the EPSRC and must withdraw from any discussion of topics in which they have such an interest.

6. Membership will last as per the individual's SAT term and by their agreement to remain on the network.

Operation

7. EPSRC's Talent and Skills team will engage with the EDI and Skills SAN members in a number of ways, both formally and informally. Formal SAN meetings will take place up to three times a year, with at least one meeting held in person.

8. The EDI and Skills SAN will address specific EDI and skills issues and topics on which EPSRC requires advice, or to explore and test new strategies and policies as they are developed.

9. In addition, and as the need arises, EDI and Skills SAN members may be engaged in some of the following: EPSRC-led workshops as a participant or speaker; round-table discussions with stakeholders; other relevant working groups.

10. **The Members of the EDI and Skills SAN** will endeavour to:

i) Act within the Seven Principles of Public Life, in particular to provide independent, informed advice

ii) Inform EPSRC of any strategic issues or concerns of which they are aware from their respective perspectives and which may affect EPSRC's plans including any potential (actual or perceived) conflicts of interest

iii) Act as 'generous generalists'

iv) Challenge constructively and/or validate EPSRC's perspectives drawing on the available evidence and their own experiences

v) Take individual and collective ownership of the advice they provide whilst recognising the separation of that advice from responsibility for the decisions made, which rests with EPSRC

vi) Work as a team with other SAN members and EPSRC and be proactive in bringing forward issues and opportunities to the attention of the EPSRC

vii) Use their profile as EDI SAN members to improve two-way communications within their respective stakeholder communities and, where appropriate, with decision-makers

11. **The Chair of the EDI and Skills SAN** will endeavour to:

i) Work with EPSRC staff and all SAN members to ensure that SAN meetings are run in accordance with the frameworks described above and create a safe inclusive space for discussion

ii) Provide advice to EPSRC in advance of SAN meetings

iii) Work in partnership with EPSRC and members of the EDI and Skills SAN to develop the forward plan of possible discussion topics for future meetings

iv) Ensure that all EDI and Skills SAN member views are heard at SAN meetings, the recorded advice is representative of the views expressed and that all present have discharged their roles appropriately

12. **EPSRC will endeavour to:**

i) Provide the appropriate information in a timely way so that EDI and Skills SAN members are adequately briefed and able to contribute meaningfully

ii) Provide an appropriate forum and tools for members to provide appropriate, high quality strategic advice

iii) Maintain members' knowledge of all the EPSRC (and where relevant UKRI) EDI and skills activities and of EPSRC strategic thinking and direction. We will facilitate information flows between the EDI and Skills SAN and EPSRC Council

iv) Be clear about the information EDI and Skills SAN members can share more widely and that which is provided in confidence

v) Inform members about the outcome of the advice and how it will be used, in particular to explain the rationale where the advice has not been followed

vi) Provide a single point of contact (EDI and Skills SAN lead secretariat) for the members of the EDI and Skills SAN

EDI and Skills Strategic Advisory Network Membership 2025 – 2026

Name	Affiliation	EPSRC Advisory Team
Chair: Deborah Greaves	University of Plymouth	EPSRC Council Member
Netta Cohen	University of Leeds	Engineering SAT
John Bridgeman	University of Liverpool	Engineering SAT
Helen Byrne	University of Oxford	Maths SAT
Jason Lotay	University of Oxford	Maths SAT
Raechelle D'Sa	University of Liverpool	Physical Sciences SAT
Paul Jenkins	Unilever/ University of Liverpool	Physical Sciences SAT
Kelly Morrison	Loughborough University	Physical Sciences SAT
Andrea Zisman	Open University	ICT SAT
Saeema Ahmed-Kristensen	University of Exeter	ICT SAT
Michael Luck	University of Sussex	ICT SAT
Sophie Walton	UK CPI	Manufacturing and Circular Economy SAT
Tanvir Hussain	University of Nottingham	Manufacturing and Circular Economy SAT
Jin Xuan	University of Surrey	Energy SAT
Peter Knight	Imperial College London	Quantum Technologies SAB
Sheila Rowan	University of Glasgow	Quantum Technologies SAB
Keeley Crockett	Manchester Metropolitan	AI SAT
Anna Scaife	University of Manchester	AI SAT
Obum Ekeke	DeepMind	AI SAT
Nishanth Sastry	University of Surrey	Digital Security and Resilience (DS&R) SAT

Sara Lombardo	Heriot-Watt University	SETB
Ian Hancox	University of Warwick	Research Infrastructure SAT
Simon Hettrick	University of Southampton	Research Infrastructure SAT
Steve Rothberg	Manchester Metropolitan University	Research Infrastructure SAT