

Promoting EDI in Mathematics

*Retreat for Women in Applied
Mathematics, ICMS, January 2026*

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Introductions & Session Outline



AIMS

- Foster open discussion
- **Share experiences** and identify barriers
- Highlight ongoing EDI initiatives
- **Generate concrete takeaways** and possible collaborative next steps



FLOW

1. Opening reflections: What is EDI in Mathematics?
2. Spotlight EDI initiatives
3. Breakouts on barriers, gaps, and future initiatives
4. Group sharing
5. Wrap-up



RULES

- **Respectful** listening
- Confidentiality
- Speak from personal experience
- **Be open-minded**
- Brief comments allow all voices to be heard

Hi, I'm Laura!

- Newcastle University Academic Track Fellow
- Research – modelling biological and ecological systems, informed by statistical analysis and inference of real data
- Keen to support women in STEM through mentoring, outreach/EDI events, social sciences research



Hi, I'm Hannah!

- PDRA, University of Glasgow
- Research – modelling real-world fluid dynamics problems with a focus on phase change, particle transport, free-surface flows
- Interested in promoting EDI initiatives with a focus on gender, dis/ability, and socio-economic background



What is EDI?

Equality

“Ensuring everybody has equal opportunity and is not treated differently because of their personal characteristics or background.” – UoG Diversity in Workplace Training

Equality Act 2010 protects against discrimination with regards to **age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.**

Diversity

“...taking account of, and placing a positive value on, the differences between people and groups of people.” – UoG Diversity in Workplace Training

Encompasses a wide range of visible and hidden characteristics such as **the protected characteristics, appearance, identity, socio-economic status, family background, education, political beliefs, intersectionality, etc.**

The GREY AREA

Inclusion

“creation of an environment where difference is seen as a benefit, where perspectives and differences are shared, leading to better decisions.” – UoG Diversity in Workplace Training

Universities must comply with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to consider how their policies affect those protected under the **Equality Act**.

Required to publish equality objectives at least every four years.

Group breakout 1: Opening reflections



“What does EDI look like – or fail to look like – in your mathematical environment?”

Prompts:

How does EDI show up in your own contexts and experiences in academia?

What inclusive practices have you seen that work well?

Format:

- 15 minutes of small breakout discussions (experiences, best practices, etc) followed by group sharing
- Intended to spark initial reflections on EDI
- Please keep comments concise and focused on overarching ideas, we'll have dedicated time for deeper exploration in group discussions later

Group breakout 1: Opening reflections – collation of discussions

How does EDI show up in your own contexts and experiences in academia?

- ECR sessions on EDI (locally)
- Training at university level – mandatory online regarding EDI, active bystander
- Teaching – accessible materials
- EDI specific funding (although difficult to find as not advertised widely)
- Well intentioned (perhaps performative) but not well thought through acts of inclusivity
- Positive and supportive atmosphere where departments have larger % of women staff and students
- Athena SWAN awards at department and university level
- Women mentors or advisors within department or broader community
- Departmental EDI committees
- BAME & LGBTQ+ representatives within departments organising events

Group breakout 1: Opening reflections – collation of discussions

What inclusive practices have you seen that work well?

- “Quiet room” available at conferences
- Breastfeeding room available at events and also within departments (not a different building!)
- Outreach programmes, into schools, queer and underrepresented communities
- Reaching out to those who are underrepresented or affected by “majority thinking” to see how we can help make things more accessible (rather than guessing/assuming ourselves)
- Women and LGBT social events at departmental level across UK
- Appropriate support for ECRs who rely heavily on supervisor relationship which can break down
- Athena SWAN committees encourage open discussions around lots of topics

EDI Initiatives & Engagement

Gender

National

- [RWAM](#)
- WAMMS
- [Piscopia](#) and [PiFORUM](#)
- [Women in Fluid Dynamics SiG](#)

Regional

- “Women in Maths” local networks – e.g. Oxford, Imperial, Liverpool, etc.
- “Women in Science” Days – e.g., WIMS @Newcastle
- ...

Race

- [Black Heroes of Mathematics Conferences](#)
- [Sisters in Higher Education Network \(S.HI.NE\)](#)
- ...

Dis/ability

- [Disabled Students UK](#)
- University specific Neurodiversity networks (e.g., Edinburgh, Warwick)
- ...

LGBTQ+

- [Spectra](#) (international)
- [Queer, Equality and Diversity \(QED\) Network for Maths](#)
- [Underrepresented Genders in Mathematics](#) (UoBristol annual conference)
- [PRISM Exeter](#) (Network)
- ...

More?



EDI Initiatives & Engagement: those added by participants

Gender

National

- [Ada Lovelace Day](#)

Regional

- Women and non-binary groups at Bath
- [Oxford Women and Nonbinary People in Maths Day](#) on Feb 28th – Free attendance - very similar vibes to retreat! Registration opens the week after the retreat 😊

Dis/ability

- Neurodiversity network for staff and students at Heriot-Watt

Race/Ethnicity

- South Asians in Maths at Bath
- [Diversity and decolonisation of mathematics conference at Warwick 2025](#)
- [Black Heroes of Mathematics Conference](#)
- [EMPS2 at Exeter](#)

General diversity/inclusion

- [Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Fund](#)
- [LMS Inclusion and Diversity Fund](#)

LGBTQ+

- [Pride in STEM](#)
- [STEM, LGBTQ & You](#)

Socio-economic background

- [93% club](#)
- [UNIQ](#)
- [Martingale Foundation for Funding for Masters/PhD](#)
- [Access to Leeds](#)
- [Opportunity Oxford](#)

Group breakout 2: Themed discussions

Theme A: Barriers to Inclusion

Theme B: Current EDI Focus & Potential Gaps

Theme C: Collaborative Projects and Future Initiatives

Reflection and Action

Format:

- 25 minutes of themed breakout discussions (see worksheet for prompts) followed by group sharing
- Intended to help identify key challenges, scalable best practices, actionable ideas, etc

Group breakout 2: Themed discussions

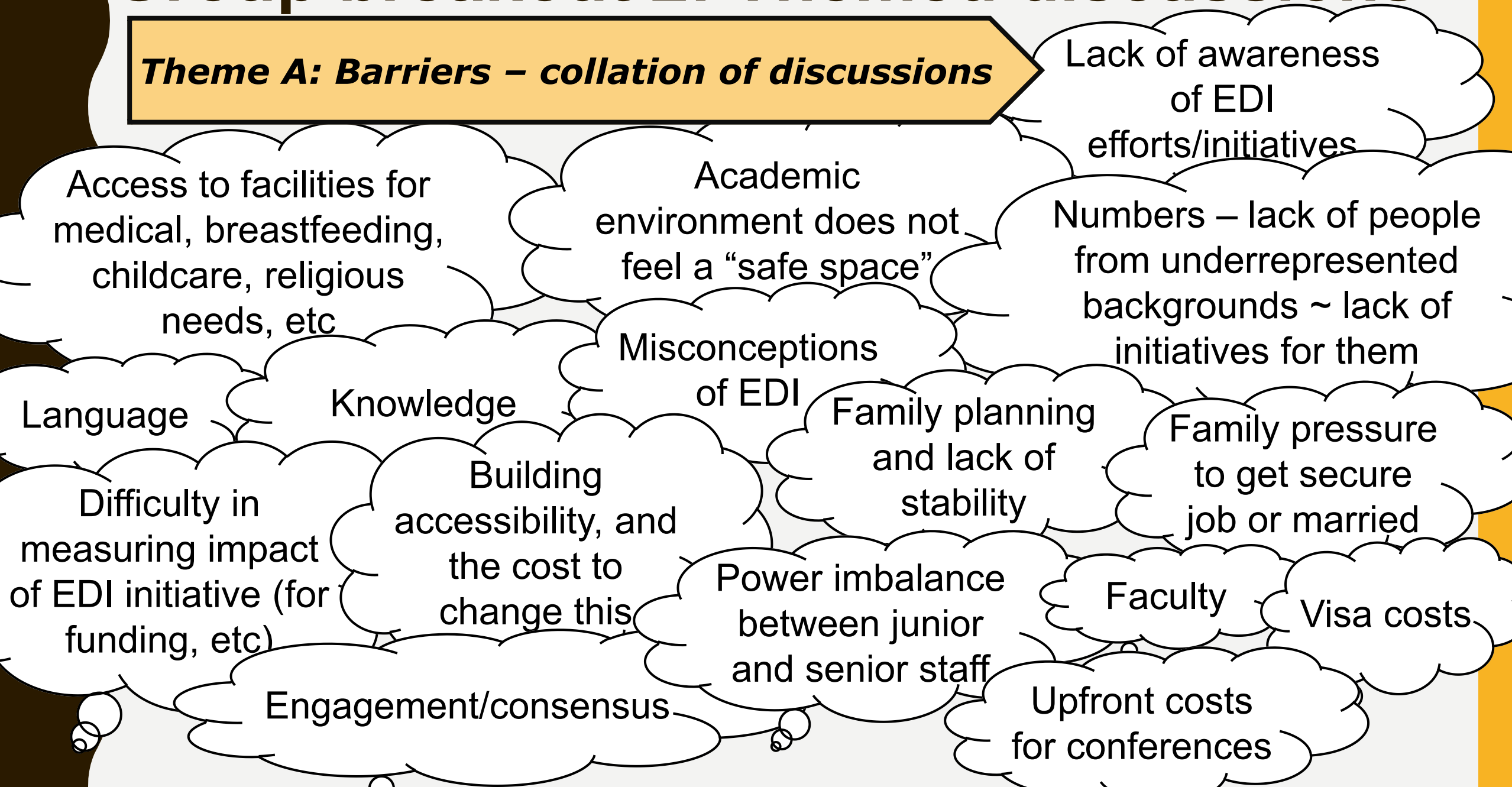
Theme A: Barriers to Inclusion

- Where do you see barriers or inequities?
- What structural or cultural issues sustain these barriers?
- How do these challenges differ for students, postdocs or faculty staff?



Group breakout 2: Themed discussions

Theme A: Barriers – collation of discussions



Group breakout 2: Themed discussions

Theme B: Current EDI Focus & Potential Gaps

- Which protected characteristics or identity groups do current EDI efforts in mathematics tend to focus on?
- Which groups or issues are less visible or less discussed?
- How can we make space for underrepresented or overlapping identities (e.g., intersectionality between race, gender, disability, etc)?



Group breakout 2: Themed discussions

Theme B: Focus & Gaps – collation of discussions

Focus

Gender

Race/
ethnicity

LGBTQ+

Protected/visible
characteristics

Tick boxes

Gaps

Low socioeconomic and
working-class backgrounds
beyond student level

Disability

Initiatives that successfully
bring together minority and
majority for understanding

People with caring
responsibilities

Intersectionality

Group breakout 2: Themed discussions

Theme C: Collaborative Projects and Future Initiatives

- What collective initiatives could make a real difference?
- What inclusive practices work well regionally that might be scaled or shared more widely?
- How could you measure or demonstrate impact?
- Who could be potential partners (departments, societies, outreach networks)?



Group breakout 2: Themed discussions

Reflection and Action

- Identify **one key challenge** or gap based upon your group discussion
- What is **one actionable idea** or next step in overcoming this challenge/gap?



Group breakout 2: Themed discussion

Reflection and Action – collation of discussions

Key challenges

Engagement from 'privileged' groups

Training

Understanding the scale – lack of data, funding/time to do so

so

Lack of infrastructure or unified policy with regards to working parents

Actionable ideas

Petitioning universities to collect data on hidden (e.g. socio-economic background) in diversity monitoring

Sharing best practices/funding possibilities across institutions, works well in other departments -> proof to ask your own department for support (e.g. student-led EDI events)

EDI seminar series that reaches across groups

Embed EDI in teaching at undergrad level

Childcare infrastructure at conferences

Having EDI sessions at 'regular' conferences

Platform for collaborating

Basic universal occupational parental pay – Athena SWAN

Next steps

- We will collate the information from the worksheets (please leave them behind!) and group discussions and add a summary (anonymous) to the end of these slides which will be shared with the group via ICMS webpage
- Is anyone interested in developing any of the ideas discussed?
- If so, how can we best facilitate working groups going forward? How can we help people connect?

YES!

Hannah & Laura to work on developing an online platform for collaborating going forward – watch this space

Final thoughts?

**THANK
YOU!**

