



Royal Academy
of Engineering



Diversity and inclusion

Progression Framework 3.0

FOR PROFESSIONAL BODIES

A framework for planning and assessing progress



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CONTACT

Royal Academy of Engineering:
diversityteam@raeng.org.uk **Science Council:**
diversity@sciencecouncil.org

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Introduction

The Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Progression Framework was developed in a collaboration between the Royal Academy of Engineering (the Academy) and the Science Council to progress D&I across engineering and science professional bodies. **In 2024 the Framework was reviewed and updated with input from professional engineering institutions and Science Council member bodies.** Find the Progression Framework 3.0 on the [Academy](#) or [Science Council](#) websites.

The Framework builds on the *Engineering Diversity Concordat* and the Science Council *Declaration on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* with the aim of helping professional bodies and learned societies track and plan progress on D&I.

Part one of the Framework asks professional bodies about progress on D&I in ten key areas, by setting out five levels of good practice for each, described by indicators. There's an additional section that links to the Royal Society of Chemistry's *Framework for Action on Publishing*. Part 2 asks for qualitative feedback on D&I progress and impact. Part 3 asks about the diversity data collected by organisations.

The aim of the Framework is to support professional bodies to:

- ▶ track performance and progress on D&I against five levels of good practice, where level zero is prior to starting, and level four the highest level of good practice
- ▶ structure conversations internally about performance and progress on D&I
- ▶ identify strengths and areas for development
- ▶ plan next steps in making progress on D&I
- ▶ connect with and learn from other organisations in the sector, sharing successes and working to address challenges on D&I.

The structure of the Progression Framework is as follows:

COVER PAGE (where you can add your organisation's information)

CONTENTS

PART ONE

- 1 Governance and leadership
 - 2 Membership and professional registration
 - 3 Meetings, conferences and events
 - 4 Education and training, accreditation and examinations (delivered by/for the institution)
 - 5 Accreditation of education and training (delivered by external providers)
 - 6 Prizes, awards and grants
 - 7 Communications and marketing (activities that promote the organisation, its activities and services)
 - 8 Outreach and engagement (activities that seek to engage and increase interest and widen participation in STEM)
 - 9 Employment
 - 10 Monitoring and measuring
 - 11 Framework for Action on Publishing (Royal Society of Chemistry)
- Your Level Summary

PART TWO

Additional questions – asking about your overall progress on D&I.

PART THREE

Diversity Data – asking about (3.1) the data you collect, and (3.2) how you collect it, how you analyse it, and challenges or barriers to data collection in your organisation.

A five-level maturity model

0

0 - Has not yet started considering EDI aspects of this area, or not able to prioritise action against other demands.

1

1 - Getting ready: Recognises the importance of EDI to its work. Case for change is emerging, data or insights just being gathered, action tends to be, for example, informal, isolated, bottom-up, one-offs.

2

2 - Launching: Organisation is interested in advancing its EDI work and exploring how to do this. Some quantitative data may be available. Actions already underway may include responsibility and accountability being formalised, guidelines being developed, activity being launched, connections being made.

3

3 - Progressing: Case for change is well established, qualitative data being gathered and shared, sustained senior level support in place, skills and capabilities being built, activity catching on, high levels of collaboration, clear signs of change.

4

4 - Embedding: The approach to change is focused on transforming the culture and systems of the organisation. Complex qualitative and quantitative data is being routinely gathered and shared, high levels of dialogue, collaboration and learning, clear evidence of change in individual behaviour and organisational culture; continuous improvement.

How to complete the framework

In this section you will find:

I	Key points to remember when completing the Framework
II	Who should complete the Framework
III	How to build a plan for completing the Framework
IV	How to complete part one of the Framework
V	How to complete part two of the Framework
VI	How to complete part three of the Framework
VII	Using the Framework to improve progress on diversity and inclusion

I. KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN COMPLETING THE FRAMEWORK

The following points are useful to remember when completing the Framework:

- ▶ You don't have to complete every section of the Framework: the Framework has been designed to be comprehensive in supporting you to embed D&I into all the different areas of your organisation's activity. However, you may choose to focus on specific areas of activity rather than everything all at once. This may be because they are a priority for you or because you have limited resources or capacity. Some aspects might not be applicable to your organisation. There is no right or wrong here but we encourage you to be clear on your rationale for selecting specific areas to focus on.
- ▶ The Framework includes INDICATORS of progress rather than prescriptive actions. Every organisation is different and there is no one right way to create D&I. Therefore, the levels within each section include indicators or descriptors of what you would expect to see, hear and experience on D&I, they don't tell you how to achieve them. There are also some blank spaces left within each level for you to add your own indicators that might be specific to your organisational context.
- ▶ Making progress on D&I should be viewed as a strategic change programme. There is no quick or simple fix on D&I. It requires a focus on work content and processes as well as culture and behaviours. That is, what you do and how you do it are both equally important in achieving D&I. Organisations that make most progress on D&I view it as a strategic change programme of continuous improvement.

II. WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THE FRAMEWORK

There are two main options for how to complete the Framework:

- ▶ One person completing the Framework on behalf of the whole organisation; OR
- ▶ A small group of stakeholders completing the Framework, representing different perspectives, such as the different areas of work (membership and registration, or meetings, conferences and events, for instance), or different aspects of diversity and inclusion (such as gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation etc.) or different geographies. In this way you will benefit from the input and engagement of colleagues. We recommend that this group forms a ‘steering group’ for completing and taking next steps on the results of the Framework.

We recommend, wherever possible, that more than one person contributes to completing the Framework. The process of completing the Framework can help to build greater understanding of the D&I implications associated with each area of your organisation’s work. It promotes dialogue internally on D&I. It can also help to build ownership for taking forward actions that result from the process of completing the Framework and accountability for achieving improvements.

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The process of completing the Framework can help to build greater understanding of the diversity and inclusion implications associated with each area of your organisation’s work.”

III. HOW TO BUILD A PLAN FOR COMPLETING THE FRAMEWORK

Below are four key steps with an indication of timeframe to allow on each that are important to consider in building your project plan for completing the Framework.

The Framework has been designed to be easy to complete. The task of selecting a level and noting any evidence used for this is likely to take no more than about a quarter of a day for each section and about four to five days for the whole framework. However, the timescales we've suggested below take into consideration factors such as consultation, coming together for discussion, obtaining and analysing data and documentation as well as building the work in with other commitments.

STEP ONE: Set-up

- ▶ Secure senior level sponsorship for completing the Framework.
- ▶ Identify who will be involved in contributing to completing the Framework.
- ▶ Map out timescales for completion of individual sections and then reviewing the whole Framework.
- ▶ Stakeholder communications – who needs to know what about the Framework and how to complete it.
- ▶ Where a group of people are completing the Framework, form a steering group with a first meeting to ensure that you are all clear on why you're completing the Framework, who results will be reported to, will decide on follow-up actions, and be accountable for monitoring the impact of actions.

TIMESCALE: Allow one to two weeks

STEP TWO: Completing the Framework

- ▶ Distribute the Framework with instructions for completion to different people leading on different parts with a clear date for completion (steering group).
- ▶ Allow time for bringing together everyone who has contributed to the completing the Framework to review it as a whole and discuss any changes to levels needed as well as learning drawn from the process of completing the Framework.
- ▶ Finalise the Framework completion.
- ▶ Sign-off of completed Framework by senior project sponsor.
- ▶ Submission of completed Framework.

TIMESCALE: Allow one to three weeks

STEP THREE: Next Steps

- ▶ Once you have received your feedback reports come back together as a steering group to review your organisation's individual report as well as the consolidated Framework results report, which will provide insights on levels achieved across all participating organisations.
- ▶ Identify strengths to build on and up to three priority areas for action.
- ▶ Agree your approach on actions, where responsibility and accountability lies for implementation, when you will review them and how you will assess impact.

TIMESCALE: Allow one to two weeks for preparing next steps once you have received your feedback reports

IV. HOW TO COMPLETE PART ONE OF THE FRAMEWORK

In part one, you simply need to decide which level best reflects the progress your organisation is making on diversity and inclusion for any or all of the sections of the Framework. You are asked to assess your progress on a scale from level zero ('not yet started') to level five (the highest level of good practice, or 'embedding').

- ▶ You can choose the section or sections in part one that are relevant to your organisation, and for which you wish to complete the Framework. For instance, you may want to complete the Framework for all sections, or for only one or two, and that is entirely up to you.
- ▶ The decision about which level best reflects the progress your organisation is making is a question of your professional judgement and the balance of evidence. The descriptors in each section are intended to be cumulative, but not exhaustive, so you may be taking action that is not included in the descriptors. Space has been left in the Framework for you to insert additional descriptors that may be specific to your organisation. When deciding which level best matches your organisation's position, you should consider factors such as the extent to which your organisation is engaged in the activities listed, or equivalent, at each level, and the progress your organisation is making on D&I overall, or for one or more particular aspects of diversity such as gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religion/belief, age, sexual orientation, disability or socio-economic status.

- ▶ Since change rarely happens in a linear or logical sequence, it's likely that you'll be doing some work at levels both above and below your final choice. In recording what level your organisation is at for each section, please highlight all the descriptors at any level that you took into account in making your choice.
- ▶ For each section of the Framework there is also an open text box asking you what evidence you're basing your level assessment on. Please ensure that you complete this box with a summary of the policies, processes and practices on which you are basing your decision about levels.
- ▶ Within each section of *the Framework* the descriptors can be read vertically (going up from level zero to four) and horizontally across three themes: (a) leadership, strategy, planning and accountability (b) policies and practices (c) insights and evaluation. That is, within each section there are good practice actions that need to be taking place across each of these themes. We have sought to group the indicators within each theme together so that you can read progress across to help you position your organisation as accurately as possible.

Be sure to keep on file the source information for your decisions, including your interpretation of any terms (such as 'leadership') in the Framework. Doing this will help you and your colleagues ensure consistency and enable you to keep better track of your progress for the next time you complete the Framework.

V. HOW TO COMPLETE PART TWO OF THE FRAMEWORK

The questions in Part 2 will help you record, celebrate, plan and prioritise your future approach on D&I.

- ▶ One is a question specifically about your relative progress on the different aspects of diversity.
- ▶ There are also open questions about your successes, challenges and future priorities on D&I.

VI. HOW TO COMPLETE PART THREE OF THE FRAMEWORK

Part three asks you to provide information about the extent to which you collect diversity data, relating to five sections of the Framework. We are not asking for your diversity monitoring data itself, rather the focus is on what data you collect, your overall response rates, how you use the data, and any challenges or barriers to data collection.

Getting into the habit of gathering and recording quantitative data across all diversity groups is important for organisations wanting to make progress on D&I. We know that accessing this information will be easier for some organisations than for others. The questions included in this section are indicative of current good practice on D&I performance measurement, supporting you to identify where things are working well and where there is more to be done in building D&I.

VII. USING THE FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE ON D&I

The Framework can be used by professional bodies as an internal tool at any time, in order to:

- ▶ **STRUCTURE** conversations about performance and progress on D&I
- ▶ **IDENTIFY** strengths and areas for development
- ▶ **REPORT** on performance to leadership teams or boards
- ▶ **PLAN** next steps in making progress on D&I.

When used in this way the completed Framework is for the organisation's purposes only; it does not have to be submitted to the Academy or the Science Council for Review.

On a periodic basis, the Science Council and the Academy will invite bodies to take part in a **collective benchmarking** exercise, when professional bodies and learned societies in science and engineering will be asked to complete and submit a self-assessment against the Framework.

- ▶ All the information provided for assessing progress and benchmarking will be **treated confidentially** by independent consultancy appointed to undertake the benchmarking.
- ▶ The purpose of this collective exercise is not to create a 'league table' but instead to gather **examples of good practice, the successes, challenges and priorities** in D&I for professional bodies in engineering and science.
- ▶ In addition to an overall report, participating organisations will receive an **individual report** summarising their progress and proposing a small number of next steps towards progress on D&I. Each individual self-assessment will lead to the generation of a spider graph.
- ▶ During the reporting stage of the collective benchmarking exercise, a spider graph will be generated representing engineering and science performance. Organisations can use this to **benchmark their performance against their peers** if they wish to.

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