

Improving Diversity in Recruitment at the Open Innovation Team

The Open Innovation Team has been growing steadily over the past six months, giving us the opportunity to run several recruitment campaigns in order to increase the size of our permanent team. This will result in six new staff members to help with increased demand for our services. We have also concurrently run our PhD placement recruitment cycle for the year ahead.

Diversity helps see policy through a different lens, and can also boost productivity and wellbeing within the team. As a result, we set out to make our recruitment processes fairer to try to increase the diversity within our own team. This is an area we need to work on, so we are proactively thinking about the best way to do this as we look to grow our team further. Here are some of the new processes and initiatives we've been developing:

Updating our PhD recruitment process

We've introduced some new elements to our selection process, which includes asking candidates hypothetical questions which do not rely on prior experience, and allow us to see how they would approach situations. We have also started to collect better data throughout the recruitment process to understand where issues exist.

Using an evidence-based approach

With better access to data we can understand which interventions work, which ones don't, and use this information to further refine and improve our recruitment process. We've already done this for our own PhD recruitment process and are working on accessing data for our permanent staff members. We can then share best practice across the department.

Testing new processes and refining interventions

We sit in the Higher Education and Further Education Group within the Department for Education. The group has removed the use of "behaviours" from recruitment campaigns to try to improve diversity. We're testing this in our current recruitment campaigns and we'll look to implement any findings in future efforts.

Consulting with academics

We're in conversation with academics from Essex University, one of our partners, who specialise in diversity in recruitment. We're aiming to use their expertise to directly inform our process; from advertising vacancies, to data analysis, to best interviewing practice.

Joining departmental networks

Members of our team have joined various departmental committees and working

groups to help understand the department's wider diversity and inclusion agenda. We're looking forward to sharing our team's lessons to help contribute to this strategy.

We welcome further discussions on this topic, so if you would like to help contribute to the diversity agenda, please get in touch with us via enquiries@openinnovation.gov.uk