

APPG on Diversity and Inclusion in STEM: 2022 Project Update

In Autumn 2021, the APPG on Diversity and inclusion in STEM put out a ‘Call for Ideas’ to invite submissions of potential activities for the APPG to focus on in 2022. After consultation with the SfAM membership, we concluded that the APPG should focus on the areas of **anti-racism** and **anti-ableism**.

Anti-racism

The Society for Applied Microbiology established the Anti-racism working group (ARWG) to identify any forms of systemic racism that touch the lives of our team, committees and members - with a goal of ensuring SfAM is anti-racist organisation. The ARWG aims to examine how historic practices may have blocked equal participation in our work, learn and improve by facing difficult issues and being self-critical and have difficult conversations and face the realities of the changes needed to make our work better. The group is currently made up of 14 members and has three designated workstreams:

1. Support – providing a safe space for members to call out anti-racist behaviour within the Society
2. Internal work – assessing the Society’s processes and documents to ensure there are no barriers to inclusion
3. Outreach – promoting the work we are doing in this area to enable sharing of best practice

Since the group has been founded, ARWG members and some members of SfAM staff have had the opportunity to participate in the anti-racism meeting on Wellcome’s anti racism principles and toolkit and Race Reflections: Beyond Bias Training and we hope to extend this training to all SfAM staff and committee members in 2022. We are working hard to ensure the Society is an anti-racist organisation and feel that the sector must do more to ensure this is the case across the entire STEM workforce.

Anti-ableism

Ableism is endemic in academia and there is substantial underrepresentation of disabled scientists in STEM. There are multiple barriers for disabled scientists in STEM due to lack of awareness, accessibility and discrimination. Concerningly, there is underrepresentation of disabled scientists in the membership and committees of Learned Societies and funding bodies. The STEM workforce is less diverse than the wider workforce and without addressing the issue of ableism, the science community will never be representative of the general community or be inclusive of the interests of all communities. As a Society we are working to deepen our understanding of the barriers that regularly impact people with disabilities and how to best address and remove those barriers. As part of this commitment, we are implementing NADSN recommendations for disability inclusion in STEMM careers to remove and ameliorate barriers faced by those who are marginalised due to disability.

Following two inquiries on education and the workforce, the Secretariat were keen to explore different options and areas. From the 20+ submissions received, the Secretariat progressed three potential ideas, which were reviewed by the Group's members from the House of Lords and House of Commons and included:

1. The digital divide and STEM skills
2. Disability in STEM – accessibility at all stages
3. Regional STEM skills inequity

We are now pleased to announce the APPG on Diversity and Inclusion in STEM's 2022 project will be **Regional STEM Skills Inequity**. Regional STEM Skills Inequity evolved from an initial submission by Engineering UK. Submissions can be found on the [APPG website](#).