

## The impact of EDIS: working with publishers for change

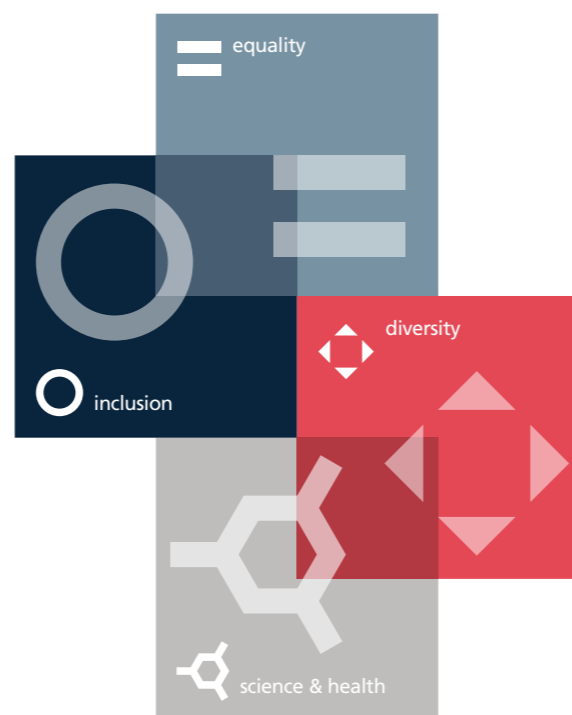
### How did this start?

The Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS) Congress 2019 welcomed the *Community Corner*, the living room of the congress to promote a different approach to networking – from specialist groups on emerging topics in microbiology to advocacy groups promoting public policy.

Clare Taylor, SfAM's General Secretary, hosted the community conversations at FEMS to highlight the importance of embracing diversity to build inclusive communities. The conversations covered some of the challenges that prohibit the microbiology community from becoming diverse and focused on the challenges faced by specific groups within the community including: Women in STEM, LGBT+ in STEM and STEM in Africa.

During the LGBT+ community conversation, panellist Dukas, a postdoctoral researcher at CNRS raised an issue regarding name changes for trans researchers. Dukas explained that researchers who have transitioned have to disclose themselves as trans every time they need to update their previous publication records or when listing

publications for grant proposals. During this discussion, it was clear that the use of dead names (referring to previous name or birth name) in previous publications can be



emotionally triggering for some trans researchers and a lot more needs to be done by publishers to ensure that this does not continue.

### Where did we hear about EDIS?

The Societies Policy team and Chief Executive attended the fifth Daphne Jackson Trust Conference in 2019, at the Institute of Physics' new headquarters in London. During the second session, chaired by Dr Pia Ostergaard, a Trustee and former Fellow of the Daphne Jackson Trust, we examined the current research landscape and important equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) issues. It was here that we heard from Dr Lilian Hunt, Programme Manager of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health (EDIS).

### What is EDIS?

EDIS is a coalition of organisations working within science and health research committed to improving equality, diversity and inclusion. EDIS' vision is for everyone to have equal opportunities and access to a successful career within science and health, its research and its outcomes.

EDIS is in a unique position, having been founded by a publicly funded research institute (The Francis Crick Institute), an independent funding charity (Wellcome)



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and a commercial partner (GlaxoSmithKline). As of January 2020, EDIS expanded its membership to 17 organisations, with the addition of The Physiological Society and the Society for Applied Microbiology.

### What happened next?

Ahead of the Society's first EDIS meeting, we posed the problem surrounding gender transition, dead naming and publication records as a discussion point to the EDIS Programme Manager, Dr Lilian Hunt. This in turn led to a thought-provoking discussion by the EDIS coalition at the members' meeting, and all 17 organisations were asked to reach out to their associated publishing arms to start the conversation and find out 1) whether there were any standard ways of dealing with a name change request and 2) whether they were designed in a way to support the needs of a researcher who has changed their name as part of their gender transition.

### The impact

Following the call from EDIS members, Wellcome Open Research and F1000 Research were the first publishing platforms to respond positively and create a new name-change policy to address this issue. The newly created policy was facilitated by EDIS and assessed and validated by researchers within the field of science and health, who have themselves been (or are) in the process of changing their names on publications. At this stage, it was extremely rewarding for the Society to introduce Dukas our LGBT+ panellist from FEMS to EDIS, to be a part of this name-change policy reviewing process.

The new trans-inclusive policies allow authors to retroactively change their names on public records. The first stage involves a researcher requesting a name change through the editorial office. Any change of name, however, will not require a new version of the article to be

created, and all existing articles will be edited to reflect this, and the DOI will remain the same. For transparency, a 'Notice of Change' will be posted, but will not identify whose name was changed to protect the person involved. Read the full [F1000 Research press](#) release here.

### Next steps?

The Society's Chief Executive Lucy Harper is having talks with Wiley along with other EDIS coalition members in the hope that other publishers will adopt such trans-inclusive name-change policies. Wiley have some guidance in their instructions for authors of the SfAM journals (and presumably more widely) and will be announcing a full name-change policy in the coming weeks/months.

#### Dukas Jurėnas FEMS LGBT+ Panellist

*"I think being a panellist and reviewing the policy made me think the situation through in a practical way and verbalise what was just the emotional feeling. It is sometimes difficult to say why you don't want to be proactive about one or another issue, especially when it is not pleasant. I think having these policies ready will be great practical and emotional help for trans people in STEM."*

#### Lilian Hunt EDIS Programme Lead

*"As Programme Lead for EDIS it's my role to look for the best ways to use the coalition to address problems raised by our members. With this name-change policy, it was evident that we could use our influence and breadth of members to start a wave of policy updates, but essential that we co-created the first example with researchers the policy was aimed to support. We're delighted to have supported F1000 Research to implement their trans-inclusive name-change policy across all of their platforms and hope to support other publishers to mirror this approach."*

