



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Awards

2024



Queen Square
Institute of Neurology



About the awards



We are thrilled to announce our first UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology (IoN) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Awards.

IoN aims to be a diverse, inclusive and supportive workplace that nurtures staff and students to reach their full potential. We want to recognise and celebrate the IoN colleagues and students that lead by example of kindness and work ethic and help make IoN an inspiring place.

Award nominations were open to staff, students and alumni, as long as they do not occupy a paid EDI role.

All nominations were reviewed by an IoN-external panel.

www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/edi/awards

Award categories

EDI Role Model Award: This award celebrates individuals who serve as inspiring role models for promoting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion within the workplace or studyspace.

EDI Advocate Award: This award recognises advocates who have demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership in promoting equity and inclusion for underrepresented communities. We perceive underrepresented communities as any group that is insufficiently represented at the IoN. This could be related (but not limited) to race, gender, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or other.

Wellbeing Advocate Award: This award honours individuals, groups or teams who have gone above and beyond to support the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of their peers, colleagues, or students, fostering a culture of care and support within the institution.

Inclusive Teaching Excellence Award: This award honours individuals, groups or teams involved in education and teaching activities, who have demonstrated a commitment to inclusive teaching practices, creating a welcoming and supportive learning environment for all students.

Workplace Culture Transformation Award: This award recognises individuals, groups or teams that have successfully incorporated EDI principles into their workflows, ways of working and work practise, leading to a positive shift in their local workplace culture and fostering an environment of inclusivity, respect, and collaboration.

EDI Beaconing Award: This award acknowledges individuals, groups or teams who actively engage in EDI work outside of IoN, whether at the Faculty of Brain Sciences (FBS), University College London (UCL), or in external organisations, showcasing their dedication to promoting inclusivity beyond their immediate community.

Diversity in Research Award: This award recognises individuals or teams whose research endeavours exemplify a commitment to diversity, whether through addressing underrepresented topics, engaging diverse perspectives, or promoting inclusivity in research methodologies and practices.



Nominations

The following pages list the nominations for each award category along with brief summaries outlining the reasons for each nomination.

We would like to congratulate and thank all nominees. You make higher education and the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology a better place!

EDI Role Model Award


Joanne Thomas: As Public Engagement Manager and chair of the EDI Committee at the Department of Imaging Neuroscience, Jo's innovative initiatives have transformed the workplace culture. Jo led the Workplace Culture Action Plan, focusing on researcher support, training, and mental health. Jo's dedication to mentoring, developing resources, and promoting UCL's 'Report and Support' system exemplifies Jo's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Prof Adrian Isaacs: Adrian has shown unwavering dedication to levelling the playing field for researchers and new cohorts. Adrian is immensely approachable and understanding, always guiding people in the right direction. Adrian's commitment to EDI goals across the department and the wider IoN is exemplary.

Prof Ed Wild: Ed champions equality, diversity, and inclusivity, forming a team of talented individuals from diverse backgrounds and providing flexibility for those with caring responsibilities. Ed works to rectify outdated systems, like improving participant consent forms for better gender identity capture. Ed promotes the Pride movement and hosted a successful EDI event with ex-MP Baroness Oona King, encouraging critical thinking about EDI.

Masuda Khanom: Masuda exemplifies exceptional dedication and compassion, going beyond her administrative role to support postgraduate taught student wellbeing. Masuda's unwavering dedication and cooperative spirit, despite having numerous tasks, inspire everyone around her, which has motivated this nomination made by postgraduate taught students.

Prof Alex Leff: Alex has been pivotal in PhD student growth, providing unwavering support and guidance. Alex's exceptional knowledge and ability to simplify complex concepts have fostered PhD student intellectual curiosity and confidence. Beyond academics, Alex is a mentor and role model, demonstrating integrity, professionalism, and empathy. Alex promotes collaboration and celebrates achievements, creating a supportive and inclusive academic community.



Won Yi Che: Won Yi Che promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion at UCL, creating a supportive study environment and prioritising peer well-being. As a master's student, she assists fellow students with essays and complex content, and shares lecture notes. Won also supports lab techniques at the Queen Square Neurology Building and offers care and encouragement, especially to those dealing with challenges like depression. Additionally, Won provides practical advice and emotional support to help international students adjust.

Dr Bhavana Solanky: Bhavana promotes diversity in the lab through activities like Soapbox Science and volunteering for local schools' "aspirations day", raising awareness of BAME backgrounds and women in science. She supports social mobility and diversity in STEM through mentoring in programs like in2science and UCL B-Mentoring. Despite working part-time, Bhavana's commitment to EDI has had a profound impact.

Prof Helene Plun-Favreau: Helene, despite managing a busy lab and team at UCL, dedicates a significant portion of her time as IoN Deputy Director for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. Her passion for this role goes beyond symbolic leadership; she actively promotes equality and inclusion. Helene carefully considers inclusivity in grant applications, ensuring representation for early career researchers, women, and ethnic minorities whenever possible. Helene serves as a role model for women professors balancing research excellence with a commitment to equity, admired by many in the department and beyond. Helene's leadership at QS IoN exemplifies genuine care and support for creating an inclusive environment, evident in her personal mentorship and support for colleagues with diverse backgrounds.


EDI Advocate Award

Dr Michael Moutoussis: Michael has made an impact through the Under-Represented Student Mentorship (URSM), which supports students from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds in pursuing academic careers in the UK. Michael's guidance has been invaluable to underrepresented students, fostering a sense of inclusion and respect within the UCL QS IoN community.

Michael Foster: Michael has been a dedicated advocate for EDI throughout his PhD at UCL's Neuroinflammation department since 2021. Michael has served on several EDI committees, including the IoN student-staff consultative committee and Faculty for Brain Sciences LGBTQ+ equity committee. Michael's leadership extends to organising PhD Journal Club meetings, departmental social events, and contributing to Pride month and LGBTQ+ research showcases.

Fiona Kinsella: Fiona has shown an exceptional leadership in addressing bullying and harassment within the Culture & Wellbeing EDI Action Group. Fiona's steadfast commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion has fostered improved communication and understanding among colleagues while significantly enhancing inclusivity at UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology. Fiona's approachability and dedication have had a measurable impact on creating a more inclusive environment.

Prof Helene Plun-Favreau: As Deputy Director for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, Helene integrates marginalised scholars' perspectives into student learning, organises impactful events like "Celebrating Women in Neuroscience" which not only highlights the achievements of women in STEM but also addresses equality issues within academia, and collaborates with LGBTQ+ STEM @UCL Network to foster inclusivity in STEM. H el ene's efforts in curriculum diversity and cross-cultural understanding through guest lectures make her a deserving candidate for this award.



Dimitris Zachos: Dimitris has been instrumental in launching the EDI initiatives at the Institute of Neurology, demonstrating exceptional administrative skills. Dimitris is supportive, communicative, and highly effective in fostering connections within the community. His infectious enthusiasm and drive have energised the EDI efforts, making a significant impact on inclusivity and collaboration at IoN. Beyond his professional competence, Dimitris is widely admired for his genuine kindness and approachability, making him a valued asset to the IoN community.

Wellbeing Advocate Award

Fiona Kinsella, Prof Ed Wild, Prof Sarah Tabrizi: Fiona, Ed and Sarah have provided invaluable emotional, wellbeing and practical support to members of the IoN community who have experienced unacceptable behaviour. They have provided help with navigating through complex systems, informing people of their rights and advocated on colleagues' behalf.

Fiona Kinsella: Fiona's dedication to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion has fostered better communication and understanding among colleagues. Fiona has been approachable and supportive, addressing EDI issues and raising awareness through her role and work on the UCL QS IoN Code of Conduct. Fiona is dedicated to combating bullying and harassment, as shown by her work with the Culture & Wellbeing EDI Action Group and her role as Bullying and Harassment lead in the IoN EDI Committee.

Argyro Alatza: Argyro is integral to the lab environment, offering unwavering support and guidance to everyone. As a mental health first aider, Argyro ensures people's well-being, both socially and professionally, fostering a safe and inclusive atmosphere. Argyro's dedication to maintaining a supportive workspace is evident in every decision she makes, prioritising the welfare of her colleagues and enhancing physical and mental health standards. Her efforts have created a welcoming environment where all members can thrive, making the lab standout within the department.

Masuda Khanom: Masuda, a vital member of the IoN Education team and administrator for IoN MSc programs, demonstrates outstanding dedication and compassion. Beyond her administrative duties, she provides crucial pastoral care for students facing challenges, actively filling gaps in UCL support systems. Masuda's genuine commitment to student well-being shines through her proactive efforts to offer guidance and support that extend well beyond her formal responsibilities, making a significant impact on our academic community.

Inclusive Teaching Excellence Award

Dr Adam Liston: Adam, as co-Director of the MSc Advanced Neuroimaging, prioritises student welfare and has implemented the Inclusive Curriculum Health Check for his course and teaching. This tool supports UCL staff in integrating inclusivity across the academic cycle, reflecting his commitment to creating an equitable learning environment. Additionally, Adam has played a pivotal role in launching the course via Distance Learning, driven by his enthusiasm for its potential to revolutionise the treatment and management of Neurological Disease in developing countries.

Prof Tim Young: Tim, as the leader of the online MSc in Clinical Neurology, is dedicated to advancing distance learning and fostering a global community of neurologists, a goal successfully realised based on student feedback. Tim's teaching approach reflects a flat hierarchy mentality, emphasising inclusivity and prioritising student wellbeing. Tim's significant contributions include spearheading the IoN EDI student survey and previously leading the Students and Education EDI Action Group.

Workplace Culture Transformation Award

Dr Mireia Mato Prado, Dr Rina Bandopadhyay: Mireia and Rina have led the creation of IoN Workload Model surveys for Academic-Research-Teaching, Professional Services, and Technical staff in response to concerns about high workloads and work-related stress at UCL. They researched workload models from other UCL departments, ensured input from all staff categories, and drafted comprehensive surveys. Their initiative, particularly focusing on professional services and technical staff, fills a crucial gap at UCL, aiming to promote transparency and fair workload allocation across IoN to enhance working culture.

Dr Edward Smith, Dr Christina Toomey: Christina and Ed, as co-Leads of the IoN Parents and Carers EDI Action Group, have enhanced resources for colleagues with parental and carer responsibilities, addressing issues like baby loss, miscarriage, working on shared parental leave case studies and guidance on return-to-work conversations. Ed has gone above and beyond and has adopted the role of Parental Champion to assist students and staff in navigating their rights and understanding the often complex UCL policies and procedures. Together, they've significantly contributed to fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment at IoN, prioritising the wellbeing of parents and carers within the community.

EDI Beaconing Award

Dr Harpreet Hyare: Serving as Equality Awareness Co-Lead, Harpreet has been pivotal in establishing five sub-groups alongside Co-lead Lauren Byrne and EDI Project Manager Dimitris Zachos. These groups include Disability Awareness, LGBTQI+ Awareness, Equity in Research, Nationality & Race, and Religion & Belief, each focusing on specific aspects at IoN and aligning with faculty objectives.

Skie Hewitt: Skie is a dedicated advocate for EDI, with a focus on disability and intersectionality. Skie is actively involved in the Disabled Leaders Network at the Global Disability Innovation Hub, promoting inclusion and equality. Skie engages in Parliament events on education access and contributes to research on assistive technology and gender. As a UCL student ambassador, Skie promote inclusion and share experience through vlogs and statements. Despite personal challenges, Skie remains committed to breaking barriers in academia and serving as a role model for disabled individuals.

Dr Bhavana Solanky: Bhavana promotes diversity in the lab through activities like Soapbox Science and volunteering for local schools' "aspirations day", raising awareness of BAME backgrounds and women in science. She supports social mobility and diversity in STEM through mentoring in programs like in2science and UCL B-MEntoring. Despite working part-time, Bhavana's commitment to EDI has had a profound impact.

Dr Javier Bautista: Javier has shown leadership in promoting LGBTQ+ inclusivity at UCL and beyond. Javier founded and chairs the LGBTQ+ STEM @UCL Network, which has grown to over 300 members and raised £8,000 for LGBT-related events. Javier organises the annual London-wide LGBTQ+ STEM Conference, providing a platform for research presentations and fostering crucial discussions. Javier influences UCL's LGBTQ+ Equality Steering Group and advocates for inclusive practices across departments. Javier's collaborations with external organisations and publications highlight his commitment to advancing LGBTQ+ rights and visibility.

Diversity in Research Award

Chanelle Anori: Chanelle not only represents black women in science at Cambridge conferences but also leads a research project focused on the underrepresented Nigerian population, promoting diversity in research environments. She serves as a role model dedicated to inclusivity for all.

Dr Jess Jiang: Jess has spearheaded a comprehensive community engagement series, spanning four half-day and one full-day events, aimed at raising awareness of dementia within the Chinese community. Recognising the critical need for early community involvement in research, Jess has taken a significant step towards bridging longstanding gaps and building trust in healthcare. Jess's work embodies the core values of EDI, both in her research and her collaborative approach with peers and colleagues at UCL.

Saadia Rahman: Saadia's passion for diversity in research prompted her to establish the IoN Equity in Research group within the IoN EDI Committee. By bringing together researchers dedicated to diversifying scientific outcomes, Saadia has created a collaborative network that fosters a supportive community within IoN. Saadia's efforts not only advance equity in research but also provide invaluable support to all those at IoN involved in this crucial area.