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Lancaster University Library have designed a Graduate Trainee position to address a lack of diversity in our staff profile and contribute to a more diverse recruitment pipeline within the sector.

Building on other work to diversify the talent pool, including the recruitment of 4 widening participation summer interns, we wanted to do something more substantial. Initially we explored the possibility of a positive action traineeship, however following some challenges, we chose to instead create a graduate internship post, with a focus on EDI issues.

To achieve this, we designed the role to include an EDI element and therefore were able to ask candidates for their understanding of EDI issues as part of the recruitment process. We also worked with widening participation career coaches within the university to target advertising the role to underrepresented groups. At the same time, we reviewed our recruitment processes and piloted new inclusive recruitment tools.

We were delighted with the diversity of the candidates who applied for this role, who represented a variety of different underrepresented characteristics including ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexuality. This has not previously been the case in other recruitment activity within our library. We believe this outcome demonstrates the impact of the steps we have taken in developing and advertising this post to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

Our recruitment process was well received by candidates who responded favourably to the process and the interview itself. We have also begun to explore how we can implement the inclusive recruitment tools we piloted for this role across the rest of the library's recruitment processes, as well as having discussions with HR as to how to make institutional changes to encourage recruitment.

We were also delighted at the experience and ideas of the successful candidate, who has been in post since mid-January.

This role was originally intended to be a Positive Action BAME Traineeship, having taken inspiration from similar initiatives elsewhere (e.g. Goldsmiths University). However, our HR expressed several reservations regarding the use of positive action which meant we were unable to pursue this approach.

We therefore had to consider how we could redesign this role and our recruitment process to encourage applicants from a broader range of underrepresented groups.

Although this wasn't our initial intention, our current library workforce has a lack of diversity across several elements including race, disability and widening participation and there is a need diversify our staff profile across all of these areas.

We also faced challenges from the inflexibility of institutional processes and systems. For example, the system mandates candidates submit applications forms, CVs and cover letters. We felt this was too onerous for an entry level post, but were unable to change this requirement.

From the beginning, we have approached this initiative as an iterative process and we're continually evaluating its impact and how we can improve this scheme. We hope to make this an annual graduate traineeship scheme and will utilise what we learn this year to inform future iterations.

We were delighted by the number of applications we received from underrepresented groups in our library workforce. Although we did not ask candidates if they belonged to these groups, many

applicants volunteered this information freely in their application forms when discussing their experiences and understanding of EDI issues. Whilst we feel this demonstrates the success of the inclusive recruitment tools we utilised in this process we also sought feedback on our recruitment process from our applicants and will use this to inform future recruitment processes. We will also seek regular feedback from our graduate trainee throughout their time in post." "Other teams may want to explore utilising graduate traineeships to diversify their workforce and encourage applications from under-represented groups but are hesitant/unable to pursue positive action recruitment to do this due to reservations from their HR colleagues or other stakeholders.

This case study will provide an example of how graduate trainee roles can be developed to attract applications from underrepresented groups without using positive action. We will provide details on how the job description and person specification were designed, and how we piloted inclusive recruitment tools and targeted advertising to encourage applications from these groups.

We don't see this initiative as a magic fix to the wider issues within the sector but rather a step in the right direction and we call on others to use the influence and position they may have, even if limited to do the same.