

Research Culture

Strategic Plan
2023-2028



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Reflections on a positive action funding initiative

(in an era of anti-Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion)

**Soo Lincoln Research Culture Advisor (EDI lead)
University of Leeds (UoL)**

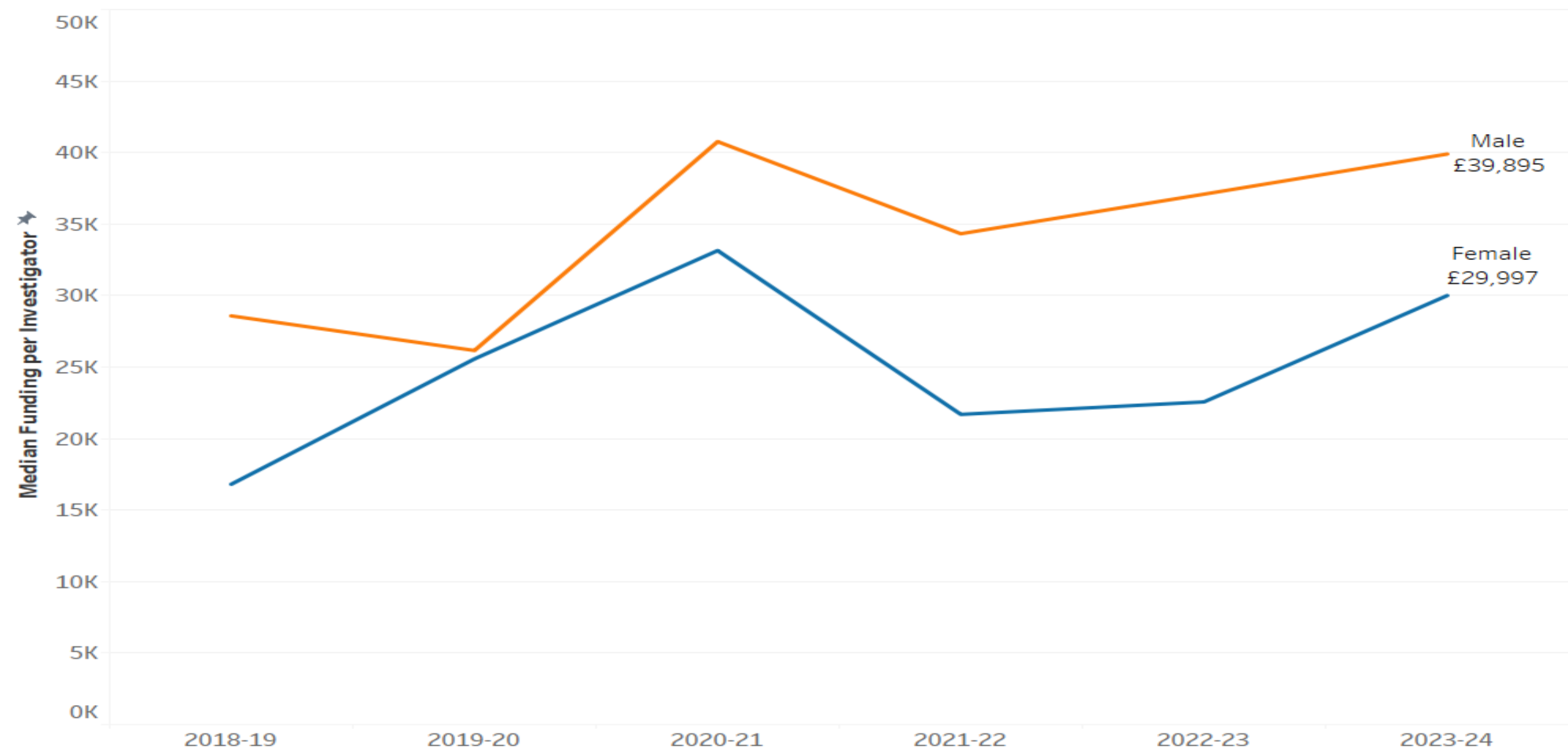
Warwick Research Culture Conference
Sept 25



University of Leeds

Funding awarded per Investigator

Female vs Male



Representations matters

- EQUITY - moral & ethical
- Impacts quality, breadth and societal relevance of research
- Diversity of perspectives
- Complex global challenges



So what can we do about it ?



'Employers can take proportionate action that aims to reduce disadvantage, meet different needs and increase participation'

- **Positive Action in the workplace**
Levelling the playing field
Must have data rationale



POSITIVE ACTION

Building a more inclusive research culture



- Data evidence
- Recruitment practices
- Approval of central EDI & legal reps
- VISIBLE allyship
- Clear pathways to support
- Dedicated opportunities
- Sponsorship
- Trial and evaluate novel approaches eg PRA
- Deadlines that avoid disadvantage
- Policy impact assessments
- Remove access barriers



University of Leeds Research EDI (REDI) Fund

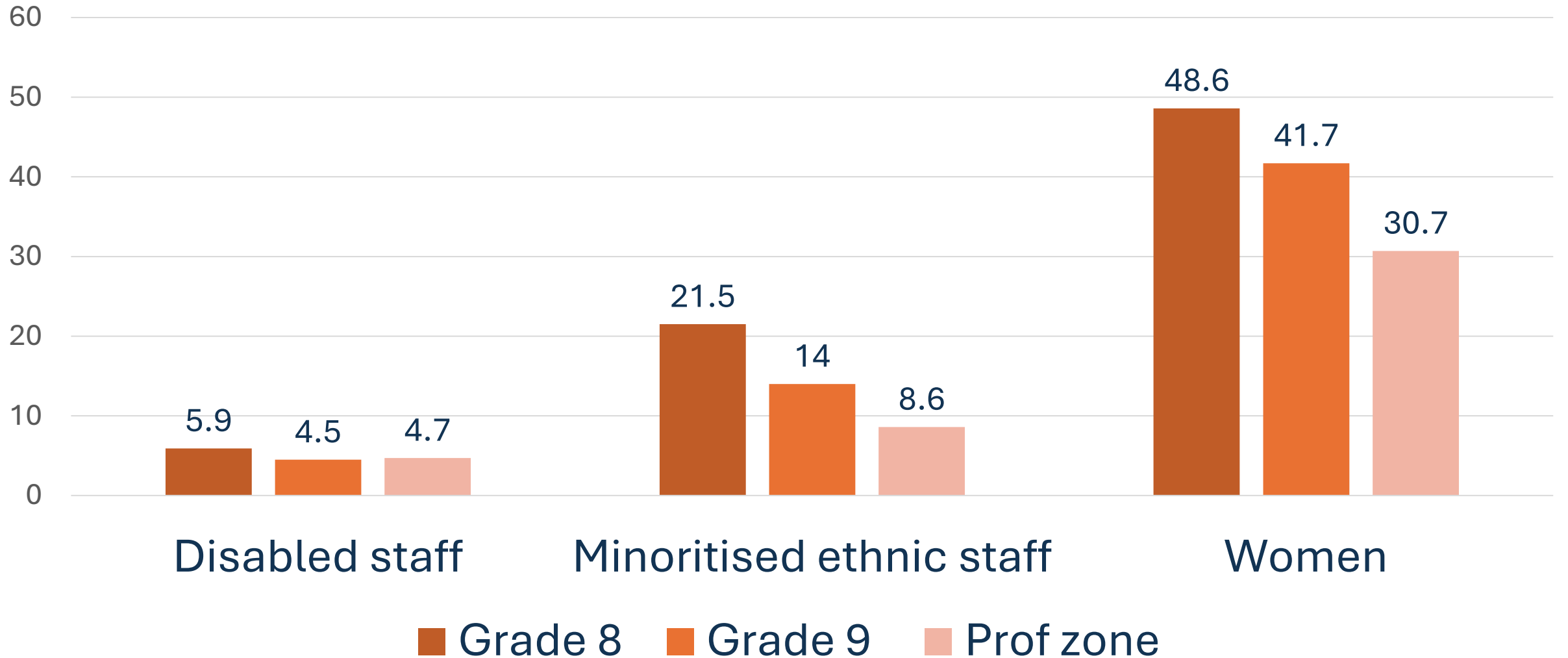
SO2 Embedding EDI principles in research practices

e.g., Allocating promotion support for researchers with protected characteristics underrepresented at senior grades

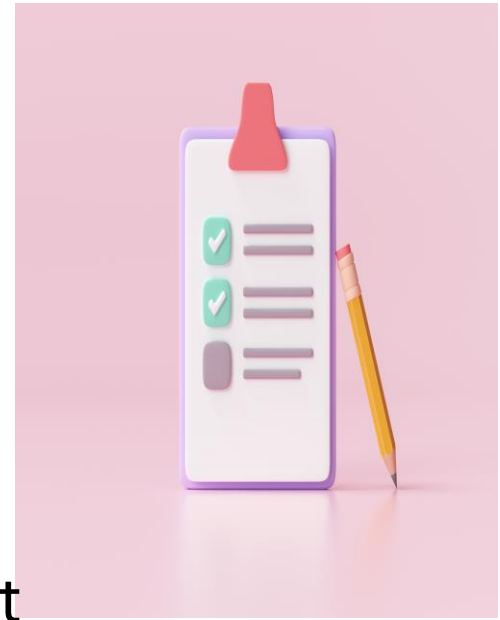
- Supports academic research staff who are **disabled, belong to any Marginalised gender or researchers from any Minoritised ethnic background.**
 - Up to £12K to support research career development aspirations
 - £396K awarded across 36 awardees (2 calls)
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Research EDI fund Data rationale

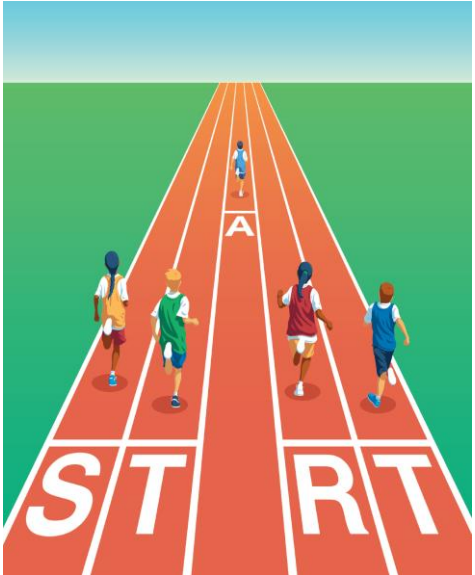
Percentages of academic staff by
demographic
Grades 8, 9 & Prof zone (UoL July 2023)



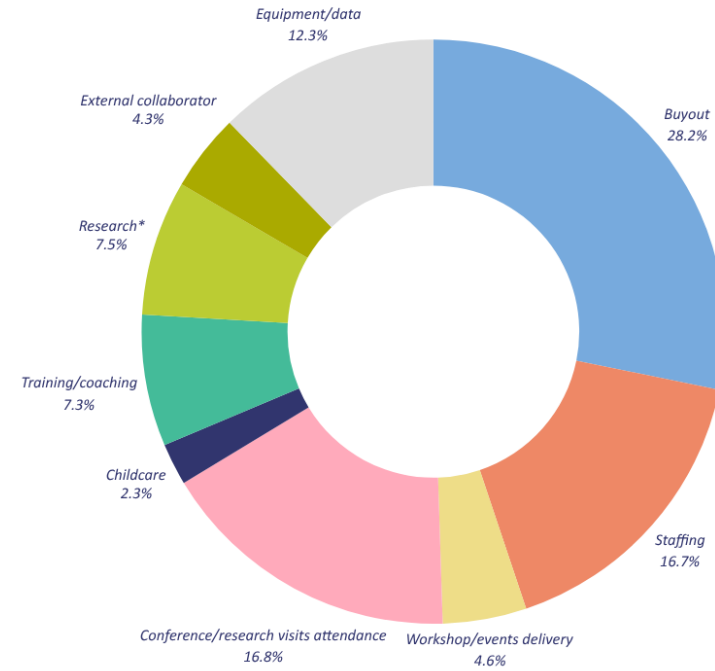
Enhanced equitability of the REDI funding call



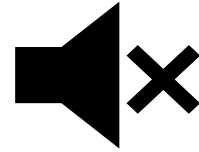
- **Light touch application & review processes**
- **Self-defined projects**
- **Additional Support**
 - Applicant workshops, 50+ attendees
 - Alternative “sign-off” methods for applicants not wishing to disclose protected characteristics to managers
- **Minimising bias during review**
 - Removal of all personal information of the candidates
 - Use of partially randomised allocation (PRA)
 - Addressing intersectionality
- **Networking and additional career development support for awardees**



Sustainable change



Backlash



Accessible activism advocacy affirming care allyship anti-racism biases Black climate science culturally-appropriate DEI disabilities discriminatory diversity equal-opportunity equity ethnicity exclusion feminism gender... hate speech health disparity identity inclusion inequalities injustice intersectionality LGBT marginalized minorities non-binary person-centred prejudice privilege racism sense of belonging social justice stereotypes systemic transgender trauma unconscious bias...





When you're used to privilege, equality feels like oppression (It's not)

(popularised by Franklin Leonard 2020)

Equity isn't a favour. It's a correction

(Sunny Kanwar, 2025)

REDI team acknowledgement slide

- Aisling Dolan – conceptualisation and foundational role; lead for the Pilot REDI fund
 - Emily Ennis – Strategic and operational support, troubleshooting
 - Rob Eaglesham - data analysis
 - Shareefa Fadhel – Strategic and operational support
 - Tom Flint – data analysis and slide content support
 - Malaika Khalid – promotional and administrative activity, data support, liaison with finance teams
 - Fiona McClement (EIU) – conceptualisation & data
-

Links

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/positive-action-in-the-workplace-guidance-for-employers/positive-action-in-the-workplace>
 - <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/black-academics-give-ukri-research-funding>
 - [diversity data report, Cancer Research UK, 2023](#))
 - <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/black-academics-give-ukri-research-funding>
 - ([Women in STEM Statistics, 2023](#))
 - <https://www.kpbs.org/news/economy/2025/02/07/federal-list-of-forbidden-words-may-jeopardize-research-at-ucsd>
 - <https://pen.org/banned-words-list/>
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/03/07/us/trump-federal-agencies-websites-words-dei.html>
 - <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-illegal-discrimination-and-restoring-merit-based-opportunity/>
 - <https://www.kpbs.org/news/economy/2025/02/07/federal-list-of-forbidden-words-may-jeopardize-research-at-ucsd>
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Positive action network – case studies

- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mathew-tata_please-fill-out-this-form-activity-7335234496708960256-FJsz?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAABSvejYBZoPhSmTvotqpm_nxnzjuGO38mTk
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Questions and comments for discussion



Intro – Context – REDI - Conclusion

