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Contributed talk: Measuring Student Awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Chemical Sciences

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In order to better support the diverse needs of all students, the School of Chemistry at the University of Leicester has designed an inclusive induction programme which aims to develop a strong sense of community at the start of its undergraduate degree programmes. Developing strong learning communities has numerous potential benefits including improved student retention, enhanced student outcomes and a greater sense of student satisfaction. An important part of developing a strong sense of community involves helping students and staff alike recognise and celebrate the diversity within our subject area and to recognise the significance of developing inclusive study environments.

The induction programme includes a student-led poster conference which celebrates the diversity in chemistry research. Students work in small teams to design posters based on major research conducted by individuals (or small groups) from under-represented minority groups. Students present their posters to peers, staff and other undergraduate and postgraduate students.

A study of first year student awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in chemistry based on pre-University educational experiences was conducted. This was achieved by inviting all first year students to voluntarily participate in a questionnaire-based study. This study also investigated the impact of the poster conference on student awareness of EDI in chemistry.

This study showed that only 51.4% of respondents (n = 72) had pre-University educational experiences that raised their awareness of EDI in the subject and 60.6% of respondents agreed that their pre-University education completely failed to address EDI in the subject. 86.1% of study participants agreed that the poster conference improved their personal awareness of EDI in the subject, 87.5% of respondents agreed that was an effective way of discussing EDI in chemistry with their peers and 71.8% of respondents agreed that this approach was an effective way of discussing EDI in chemistry with staff.

Region

UK/Ireland

Key words

Inclusion, Diversity, Equality, Induction & Undergraduate

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