

ARB Equality, Diversity and Inclusion proposals – February 2024 – Clarification Q&A

Question is in black text. *ARB reply is in red text, italic*

1. Has the organisation conducted any previous reviews, audits and/or assessments on their EDI work previously? If so, could you let us know what that was? *No, no current EDI-specific audits, but we do include some relevant questions in the annual staff survey.*
2. Has the organisation recognised any current challenge areas of EDI at present? E.g. engaging staff, recruitment, attracting diverse talent, support on inclusive policy and procedures etc? *Our corporate strategy sets out some of the areas in which we'd want to improve, and the EDI section on our website has some information.*
3. Are you willing for us to conduct new staff surveys and hold focus groups to better inform our assessments and reviews? *Yes, although we'd want to make sure they complement rather than duplicate our staff survey.*
4. Are you willing for us to conduct surveys and hold focus groups with the board? *Yes, as above.*
5. From our experience at Mission Diverse, to achieve the best success for work of this nature, we know that regular ongoing support/check-ins following any reviews and audits are as beneficial as the review itself. In relation to ongoing monthly support, this would enable us to guide you through the recommendations/targets and themes we identify. But as this on-going guided support is not referenced in the tender specification - is it something we can include in our proposal? *You're welcome to include it, along with the cost, and we'll consider it against other proposals.*
6. Are there any other tender clarification questions we can have access to that have been previously submitted. *No clarification questions at present, all questions and answers will be shared on the contract finder portal.*
7. Has the organisation conducted any previous reviews, audits and/or assessments on their EDI work previously? If so, could you let us know what that was? *No, no current EDI-specific audits, but we do include some relevant questions in the annual staff survey.*
8. Has the organisation recognised any current challenge areas of EDI at present? E.g. engaging staff, recruitment, attracting diverse talent, support on inclusive policy and procedures etc? *Our corporate strategy sets out some of the areas in which we'd want to improve, and the EDI section on our website has some information.*
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12. Are there any other tender clarification questions we can have access to that have been previously submitted. *No clarification questions at present, all questions and answers will be shared on the contract finder portal.*
13. We plan to submit our clarification questions on Monday, but hope it's okay to just ask on the format of the response. Aside from it being a maximum of 10 pages, do you have a preferred format for our submission, i.e. Word or PowerPoint? *There is no preferred format for submission, aside from the maximum page length.*
14. We understand from the proposal that this assignment has an external (i.e., supporting the sector) and internal (i.e., improving Arb's processes and policies) function. The approaches for these two functions are different - e.g., in terms of benchmarking (e.g., whether the 'comparison' is comparable sectors or comparable organisations), and which stakeholders are consulted. Therefore, please could you clarify whether your priority is internal or external? If both, could you provide any further clarification on how you see the two interacting/informing one another? *Equal priority although that doesn't mean equal resources. We'll want advice on that. We have no preconceptions about how the two will interact, but we want the same positive approach in addressing the challenges, but accept the methodology may look different.*
15. The proposal outlines (p. 3) three objectives for this work: 1. Benchmarking current EDI performance; 2. Supporting Arb to refresh and develop its strategy; 3. Working with Arb to develop a workplan to deliver meaningful and positive change. Arb's current strategy runs from 2022 to 2026: please could you clarify whether you seek to make immediate refinements to this as a result of this assignment? *The strategy does run until 2026 and we do not feel the outcome goals necessarily need to change. As referenced, we also recognise that change and improvement takes time and would expect any successful bidder to work with us over an initial twelve-month period.*
16. The assessment and selection criteria (p. 4) says 'the framework, above'. To confirm, this refers to the table at the bottom of p. 3? – *Yes, that is correct.*
17. Related, we believe this project should start with a scoping phase, before then supporting Arb staff (and potentially external stakeholders, dependent on scope) to prioritise actions - it is therefore not possible to say ahead of time which elements of the framework would surface as priorities. Are you willing to accept a more open proposal setting out how we'd help you identify gaps and prioritise action? *Yes, we are open to considering alternative approaches and suggestions.*
18. How do you currently audit your policies? *Our policies are reviewed periodically by our Senior Leadership Group and Board. We also use external Internal Audit. It has been sometime since any of our EDI policies have been audited.*
19. Do you currently have methods to consider diversity within the profession? *We capture data from our register.*
20. The above is mentioned in the first workstream within the template, and I was interested in how much weight you are placing on this area. *We are committed to making meaningful changes both within our own organisation as well as ensuring we use our regulatory influence to ensure we improve inclusion within the profession we regulate.*
21. When you say 'refresh and develop your strategy', do mean your corporate strategy or your EDI strategy? If you referring to the latter please can you share this with us? *We don't have a separate EDI strategy, we have one corporate strategy that includes all our work. There is a section under 'Our approach', the paragraph called 'promoting diversity' which best relates to our aims on EDI, and specific aims are included in each section and the annual business plans.*

22. Are you able to update on any progress made on pages 34 + 35 of your EDI report (*what will ARB do to help improve representation?*)

Taking the bullet points in order starting with the left column first and then moving straight into the right

Page 34:

Under way, with some stages complete. Our expectations are set out through our new Standards for Learning Providers and approach to accreditation, with further detail to be published shortly in our accreditation handbook. We're in the process of embedding our new accreditation approach so haven't started collecting and analysing all the data yet, but the processes are in place to do so.

As above

As above

Under way

Page 35

Complete

Complete

Under way

Ongoing – we continue to meet this commitment in regularly publishing data

Ongoing - we continue to meet this commitment in how we set out and analyse consultations

Ongoing