

As the UK's national student space society, UKSEDS supports students and graduates interested in space across the country. Operated by a team of ~80 volunteers, UKSEDS runs a variety of projects such as competitions, conferences, workshops, and outreach programmes. Throughout all their activities, they aim to make everyone welcome, by making space accessible to all.

Here, Aine O'Brien and Molly Service, UKSEDS Diversity Team Leads past and present, give WIA-Europe a snapshot of some of their recent and upcoming activities centred around the need for an inclusive space sector.

Wider Events and Research

At UKSEDS, we collect anonymised data about the demographics of the participants in our activities and compare these to wider sector information, both of the UK's wider student cohort and space workforce, to inform our future work. Our flagship event, the National Student Space Conference (NSSC), where over 400 students hear from space professionals and researchers, has attracted increasingly diverse attendees over the last 2 years. This is in line with a focus on accessible initiatives put in place since 2018. We are advocating for an inclusive sector to remove barriers, so that the diverse incoming workforce, such as those attending NSSC, are not pushed out or deterred from entering the sector. You can see the evidence for this in our poster presented at the 50th Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in Houston last year, [available here](#).

Diversity in Space Careers (DISC) Conference

In 2018 UKSEDS launched Diversity in Space Careers (DISC), a one-day conference championing equality, diversity, and inclusion in the space sector. UKSEDS brought together space sector delegates spanning academia, industry and policy makers to share best practice on inclusivity in space. Speakers shared their own experiences in overcoming barriers such as discrimination, bullying and harassment. DISC 2021 will be taking place in January. A particular focus will be on how to be a good ally, as well as recognising one's own privilege. Stay tuned for announcements on DISC 2021 on the UKSEDS social media, or to find out more about the event please contact diversity@ukseds.org

Highlighting Diverse Role Models

UKSEDS runs Spotlight Sunday, a social media project highlighting diverse space role models. This features stories from people of all backgrounds and roles within the sector who reflect the core values of UKSEDS. Every Sunday, profiles are posted across our social media, representing all communities, showing everyone has the potential involved with space. Previous spotlights include astronaut [Sally Ride](#) and [Anushka Sharma](#), the co-founder of the London Space Network.

Marking Black History Month

October is Black History Month in the UK. To mark this, throughout the month we will be celebrating and raising awareness for the contributions made by Black people to the space sector. We have changed the UKSEDS logo to incorporate the [Garvey colours](#), and will be featuring a range of Black professionals in Spotlight Sunday. The main event will be 'A Space for Black Voices', which will be live-streamed on the UKSEDS YouTube channel on

24th October, as part of the Careers Launch Online series. This will be a virtual panel featuring Black professionals from across the sector, discussing their work and experiences. Panelists include Ashley Lindalía, Dr. Sian Proctor and Haley Harrison.

University Societies Support

There are many UKSEDS branches (individual universities' societies) across the UK; we help ensure they run diverse and inclusive activities and events. The UKSEDS Diversity Team have written a comprehensive handbook to do this. Recommendations include using pronoun indicators, either through badges and stickers, or in email signatures. This helps normalise the practice of asking/giving pronouns, and helps create trans inclusive spaces. We have also provided advice in removing barriers for disabilities, and making events accessible to all.

As the industry grows it becomes even more imperative that the workforce is supported, cultivating an equal and diverse environment that promotes forward thinking. UKSEDS hopes that through the continued support of its members and wider community, we'll be able to shift perspective and spark change, both at a grassroots student level and beyond.

- You can read more about the diversity and skills pipeline research UKSEDS has conducted [in our publications here](#)
- Follow UKSEDS on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @UKSEDS