



Introduction

The [BIG IDEAs \(Behavioural Insights: Gender, Inclusivity, Diversity, Equality and Access\) Initiative](#) is funded by the UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowship and hosted at the University of Exeter Business School. We leverage learnings from across economics, psychology, and management to design and test interventions in large-scale randomised controlled trials at leading organisations across the globe. These interventions will lead to a better working knowledge of how we create more fairness in the workplace through observing and working with actual hiring, promotion, and retention outcomes of disadvantaged groups.

We are a team of leading academic researchers at Exeter and Harvard working with business leaders, such as BIT and Unilever. We are funded by the UK government.

Expertise

[Professor Oliver Hauser](#) is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Exeter and is leading the BIG IDEAs Initiative in his capacity as UKRI Future Leaders Fellow. He is also a Turing Fellow at the Alan Turing Institute, an academic affiliate of the Behavioural Insights Team (“Nudge Unit”) and a research affiliate at the Global Institute for Women’s Leadership at the Australian National University.



Previously, he taught and researched at the Harvard Business School, Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Extension School. He also held Research Fellowships at Harvard’s Women and Public Policy Program and the Behavioral Insights Group. Oliver is the key contact organisations will be working with.



The BIG IDEAs [advisory board](#) is made up of renowned experts in the field of behavioural science, such as [Professor Iris Bohnet](#), Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government at the Harvard Kennedy School, and author of the award-winning book ‘What Works: Gender Equality by Design’.

The BIG IDEAs initiative is already working with [key organisations](#) who are at the forefront of developing fairer workplaces.

Recent Case Study

Members and affiliates of the BIG IDEAs Initiative recently published a Harvard Business Review article on the gender proportionality principle (GPP) as a way to tackle gender inequality in promotions. The GPP stipulates that a given level in an organization should aim to reflect the gender composition of the level immediately below it. A version of the GPP has recently been implemented at Unilever to raise awareness of DEI among managers at critical moments and encourage thoughtful decision-making around hiring, promotion, and retention.

You can read more about the GPP in the [Harvard Business Review](#).

Current Opportunity

Our latest project involves really getting to the bottom of how hiring is affected by the all-important CV – how do seemingly unimportant facts about applicants affect their chances, and can blinding those details reduce bias? Does blind hiring work best in certain areas of an organisation or as a blanket policy? What information should be redacted in order to make sure bias is not disadvantaging the top talent?



MEVITAE

The goal is to use the cutting-edge research tools to answer these questions, using the latest data science and the use of randomised controlled trials. To help us to do so, we are working with the industry leaders in blinding CVs during recruiting, [MeVitaE](#), in carrying out this research.

We are looking for organisations that want to join us to help pioneer best practice for hiring diverse, talented, and productive staff members.

Requirements

Interested organisations should have an interest in making our world a fairer place through reforming working practices to combat discrimination. **There is no direct cost to interested organisations, as we are government funded.** However, partner organisations need to dedicate time and internal resources to meet with BIG IDEAs researchers occasionally. They also need to have reliable hiring data going back at least three years, including data on previous applicants' demographics, as well as large volumes of applicants (>2,000 per year), which apply to different parts of the business (e.g. departments).

FAQs

- **Is there a cost to this project?**
 - No, as BIG IDEAs is funded by the UK government this is a unique opportunity to obtain free consultancy on your hiring practices from BIG IDEAs. MeVitae, our partner organisation, may have costs to this project
- **Will the applicant data be secure?**
 - We take data security very seriously. We only ever accept anonymised data from organisations, and have rigorous data sharing agreements in place with our partners before any data is shared. We store data only on protected restricted user access computers within our research team.
- **Will I get to keep the data and findings?**
 - Absolutely! We will share all our results and findings with you right away.
- **Will the results of the research be published?**
 - As publicly funded researchers, it is our duty to make results widely available and we therefore publish our research results in top academic journals and selected media outlets. Many organisations we work with enjoy both the first access to the cutting-edge research results and the reputational benefits the result from press coverage. However, before anything is published, organisations can read the manuscript and always have the option to remain anonymous if they wish, meaning the results will still be published but the organisation name will never be revealed.
- **How do I apply?**
 - Interested parties are invited to email Professor Oliver Hauser at o.hauser@exeter.ac.uk and Riham Satti at riham.satti@mevitae.com to set up an initial meeting.