**Improving inclusivity in distance-learning group project work for engineering students**

**Fiona**

Hello, I'm Fiona Gleed and I'm presenting initial work on improving inclusivity in distance learning group project work for engineering students. Within engineering as a profession, we tackle complex projects involving wicked problems often working in interdisciplinary teams. Efforts to develop a more representative engineering workforce are ongoing and increasing as the profession recognises the role of diversity in achieving inclusive design.

Engineering education favours problem-based learning within a subject benchmark derived from standards for accreditation. A significant emphasis is placed on laboratory investigations and projects, which usually support the development of peer networks within a cohort prior to group work. In contrast our distance learning students encounter each other primarily online often through asynchronous forums and dependent on study choices. It is possible, likely even, that students will start a model with no previous interactions with anyone in their tutor group.

Our intention is to review current group work to understand context processes assessment and guidance. We will be surveying students and tutors to establish patterns of experience and interviewing a small number of students to understand potential issues for individuals with particular profiles.

Guidelines for students will recognise that they need both to be included, and to include each other in the projects they collaborate on. Advice for tutors will draw on therapeutic pedagogy to develop their skills as facilitators and we will share insights on inclusive design of group work activities and assessment with module teams.

Thank you for joining us in this asynchronous interaction and please do get in touch if there are aspects that you would like to discuss.