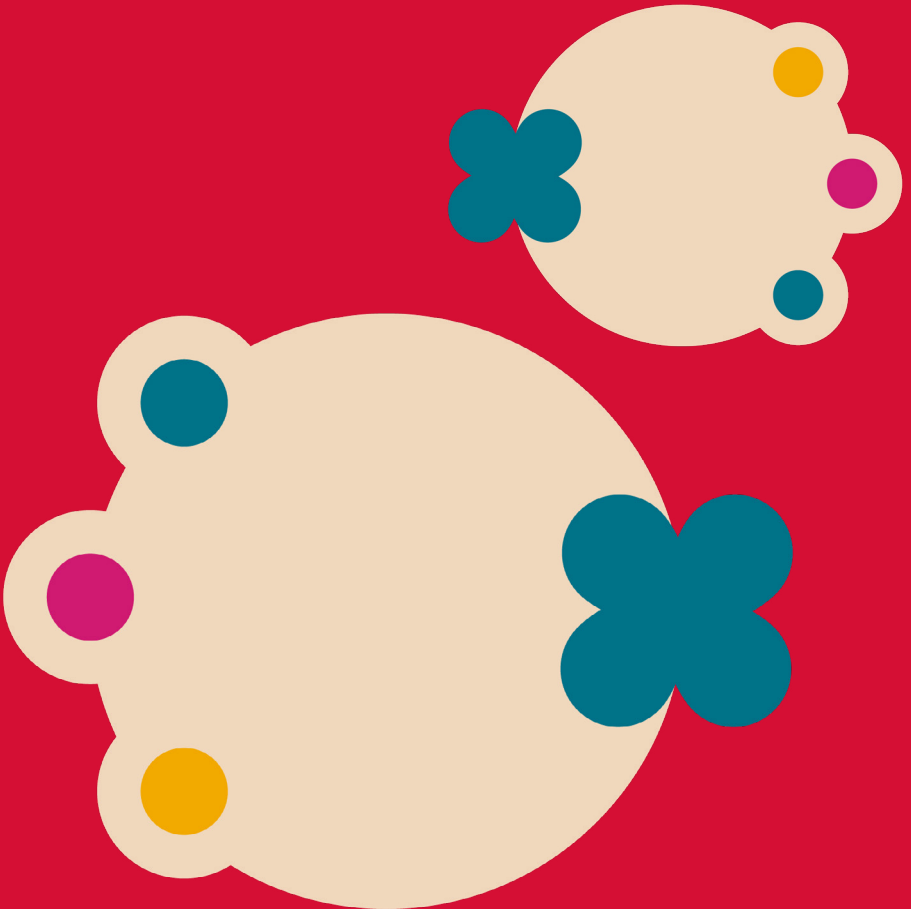




THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



**Implicit
Knowledge**
A conversation guide

Implicit knowledge. Discuss.

This conversation guide is for those who are seeking and holding implicit knowledge to elicit and share this. Examples of implicit knowledge are:

Unwritten rules and expectations

Informal networks

Assumption and bias

Unspoken norms

Unfamiliar vocabulary

To support our knowledge-seekers and knowledge-holders in sharing, we have prepared this guide to planning and holding implicit knowledge conversations.

More information on this project and an extended conversation guide is available - see the final page for links.

Principles for implicit knowledge conversations...

Be curious and open to discovery

Be prepared to learn and unlearn

Be non-judgemental

Be willing to share

Consider organisational context

Be aware of any power dynamics

Implicit knowledge. Discuss.

Things for knowledge seekers to consider

- Gaps in your knowledge might be obvious, or they might not. It is not always easy to know what you don't know, so taking time in advance of the conversation to think through what the problem or issue might be, from your perspective, can be a good starting point for a conversation that reveals implicit knowledge.
- Approach conversations with curiosity and willingness to unlearn things.
- Being a researcher or research professional can be different in different disciplines, Schools, and so on, so there are often layers of implicit knowledge to navigate.
- In a complex organisation like ours there often is help and expertise to be found, but it can take persistence to find it.
- It's important to be proactive in addressing implicit knowledge gaps, but there is a tendency to take personal responsibility for structural issues. Identifying where an issue is beyond the individual or interpersonal can help identify less-obvious next steps.
- If you find the information you are seeking or come to understand processes better, consider how you can share it with others.

Things for knowledge holders to consider

- Recognise the knowledge you hold, and how it is perceived because of your own role. Power dynamics can be obvious or subtle, and have real consequences for implicit knowledge and how it is experienced.
- Approach conversations with curiosity and willingness to unlearn things. Pay attention to whether the assumptions and knowledge you hold are still accurate and up to date.
- Where you as knowledge-holder face structural barriers to being heard or valued for your knowledge, these conversations face additional challenges.
- Consider who may need to know what you know, and be proactive.
- Think about who is and isn't in your networks of informal knowledge sharing, and expand these where you can.



Making Implicit Knowledge
About Research More Visible
project information
August 2026

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