



Equality Objectives 2020 – 2024

Our target audience

This document is aimed at:

- Students (present & future)
- Staff (present & future)
- Trustees and Co-optees
- Visitors
- Clients
- All relevant external stakeholders (funders, suppliers, buyers, regulators)

General information about Equality at RVC is available on our web-pages: www.rvc.ac.uk/about/our-people/human-resources/equality.

Alternative versions and further information

This document will be published as a Word document and as a PDF file on the College website at www.rvc.ac.uk/about/our-people/human-resources/equality.

The standard copy is in minimum 11 point Arial font. Alternative versions can be provided upon request. We have aimed to make the layout and structure accessible for all but welcome comments if the document does not meet your requirements.

To request an alternative version, or if you have any other queries about the document format, please contact:

**Human Resources
Royal Veterinary College
Hawkshead Campus
Hawkshead Lane
North Mymms
AL9 7TA**

Email fnazirbhatti@rvc.ac.uk

Tel **01707 666369**

Comments on the content will be referred on to the appropriate member of staff as necessary.

Introduction

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) has a unique heritage in the English-speaking world of over two centuries of innovation and leadership in veterinary medicine and recent decades have seen us make many advances in all our areas of work.

The RVC is strategically committed to the three pillars of its mission; to education (Our teaching and learning and our student experience), to the discovery and translation of new knowledge (Our research and innovation) and to the delivery of optimal clinical care and opinion (Our clients and patients), but above all, the RVC seeks to push back the frontiers of what is possible in veterinary medicine and its associated sciences and to do this we are committed to the creation of an inclusive, diverse and effective professional working community (Our people). The RVC's current strategy can be found here: [Strategic Plan RVC to 2021](#)

How we deliver this mission is important for achieving our purpose, our vision and our mission successfully and so underpinning our main strategic mission areas are a defined set of professional behaviours that we expect of our staff and student community and three crosscutting themes. The RVC behaviour framework can be found here: [RVC Behaviours \(internal link\)](#) and the three crosscutting themes are:

- The enhancement of our international engagement and impact
- The development of, and support for, a diverse and inclusive community
- The creation of an environment that supports the wellbeing of our staff and students

Promoting and supporting diversity in the work and study place is about valuing everyone in the organisation as an individual contributing to the whole. However, in order to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce it is critical to have an inclusive work and study environment where everyone feels able to participate and achieve their potential. Whilst the Equality Act 2010 provides a legislative framework for organisations to implement, an effective approach to diversity and inclusion goes beyond legal compliance and seeks to add value to an organisation by contributing to employee well-being and engagement, and improving our performance in support of our purpose and mission. There is a growing body of evidence to show that a genuine productive commitment to diversity and inclusion benefits organisations and helps them work more effectively.

One of the ways in which we embed the cross-cutting themes outlined in the RVC Strategic Plan, is by meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the statutory equality duty for Public Authorities to prepare and publish meaningful, effective and achievable equality objectives that help us to meet our general equality duty and demonstrate good practice across all our areas of work.

Every four years we define SMART equality objectives to support equality, diversity and inclusion at the RVC, and progress against these objectives is monitored and managed by the Equality and Diversity Committee and reported to the College Executive Committee and the RVC's Council on an annual basis.

The last equality objectives and action plan covered the period 2015-2019 and this phase has now come to an end. This new set of equality objectives will define direction, action and accountability from March 2020 until March 2024.

The Legal Context

The Equality Act (The Act) was introduced in October 2010 to harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

The Act defines nine protected characteristics these are:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion and/or belief,
- sex,
- sexual orientation.

The RVC is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires us to have due regard (i.e. be active) with regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on the protected characteristics as well as any other unlawful conduct defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Actions to advance equality of opportunity include:

- Removal or minimisation of disadvantages suffered by people with protected characteristics due to having that characteristic.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics that are different from people who do not have that characteristic.
- Encouraging protected groups to participate in public life and in any other activity where participation is disproportionately low.

Actions to foster good relations include:

- Tackling prejudice
- Promoting understanding and improving awareness

Public Authorities are also required to:

- Publish equality data on an annual basis
- **Prepare and publish one or more equality objectives (this document) to meet the general equality duty. This should be done at least every four years.**
- Ensure the objectives are specific and measurable.

Further information about the equality act is available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>.

Draft RVC Equality Objectives 2020 – 2024

1. Embedding a Culture of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Responsibility	Timescale	Annual Progress Update
1.1 Continue to ensure Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) underpins all formal decision making at the RVC.	Shows EDI is embedded into the culture of the RVC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI continues as a standing item in agendas of key RVC committee meetings. • Chair of EDC to remain on College Executive Committee (CEC). • Committee training for all Chair, Secretaries and Panel members which will include EDI. • As far as is possible all timetabled events take into account our commitment to family friendly thinking and religious and cultural requirements. • All formal decision making processes, policies, services and functions are Equality Impact Assessed. 	<p>Heads of Departments, Chair of Committees</p> <p>College Secretary</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) and All Committee and Panel Chairs</p> <p>Staff responsible for Policy/Service development.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

<p>1.2 RVC to integrate awareness of unconscious bias into the training which supports the process where key decision making takes place,(e.g. recruitment of staff and students, flexible working, managing student misconduct, Specific Learning Disability complaints, disciplinary actions and grievances).</p>	<p>To ensure that there is fairness and transparency in key decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the numbers of under-represented staff, identified via annual Equality Monitoring reports. • Feedback from the Employee Engagement Survey (EES) identifies that under-represented groups are satisfied with key RVC decision making processes. • An analysis at exit interviews shows that staff members viewed RVC as a fair and transparent employer. • Students Annual Transparency return highlights no major admissions differences between under-represented groups. 	<p>D&I Manager, HR Operations Manager, Chair or EDC</p> <p>Deputy Director of HR/D&I Manager</p> <p>Employee Relations Manager</p> <p>Academic Registrar, Director of RVC Access and Director of LWB</p>	<p>December 2020, thereafter annually</p> <p>December 2021</p> <p>December 2020, thereafter annually</p> <p>Annually</p>	
<p>1.3 To ensure that Council and its sub-committees understand and demonstrate due regard to the College's, and therefore their own, responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.</p>	<p>It is a requirement of governing bodies and an expectation of their duties as outlined in the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Code of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All meetings consider whether or not there has been any item that has a positive or negative impact on our commitment and duties with regard to Equality and Diversity and the Well- 	<p>Secretary to Council, Diversity and Inclusion Manager (D&I) and Vice-Principal: Students</p>	<p>September 2022</p>	

	Governance upon which the RVC bases its assessment of governance effectiveness.	<p>being of our staff and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council meet the requirements laid out in the Committee of University Chair's Code of Governance. <p>Council have a greater understanding of EDI to assist them when considering and approving EDI reports, e.g. Equality Monitoring reports, Athena Swan and the Access and Participation Plan.</p>		Ongoing	
				Ongoing	
1.4 Review and implement the principles of the Dignity at Work Policy. Relevant training must also be provided to managers on how to support and manage an allegation of harassment/Bullying that has been disclosed to them.	We need to create a common understanding across the College of the types of behaviours and actions that are and are not acceptable and ensure that staff are clear and feel supported on how they can report such matters. Therefore building a culture in which we all work and study in a respectful and dignified manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaunch of Dignity at Work Policy. • Athena SWAN and EES 2020 surveys show that staff feel supported and understand the mechanism for reporting cases of harassment and bullying. The College clearly communicates acceptable behaviours across its staff and student community and addresses these issues seriously. 	<p>Deputy Director of HR D&I Manager</p> <p>Deputy Director of HR, Chair of Athena SWAN Self - Assessment Team (SAT) D&I Manager</p>	<p>June 2020</p> <p>December 2021</p>	

	Line managers require appropriate guidance and support to enable them to receive and deal with allegations of harassment and bullying.				
1.5 Champion and promote a culture where disabled staff and students can thrive by providing clear signposting to appropriate support mechanisms and ensuring that both the working and learning, teaching and assessment environments are inclusive and accessible.	<p>Equality monitoring data shows an under-representation of College staff who have declared a disability at 3.6 % compared to sector average 4.9%.</p> <p>To ensure we meet our requirements under the Equality Act and that we receive positive feedback from our staff and student measurement tools, such as (EES) and National Student Survey (NSS), Student Barometer and Student Mental Health Charter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased disability staff disclosure rate so that it is in line with the sector average. Increased awareness of support available so that staff and students feel supported when making a disability disclosure. This information will be measured via the EES and feedback from EDC. EES highlights an increased satisfaction level from disabled employees. From 87% in 2017 survey to 92% in 2021 survey. There is an established process in place for dealing with staff and student 	<p>E&D Champions, D&I Manager and Head of Student Advice Centre</p> <p>D&I Manager and EDC Champions</p> <p>Deputy Director of HR, D&I Manager and EDC</p> <p>Director of LWB and Head of Student</p>	<p>Jan 2021, Thereafter annually</p> <p>December 2021</p> <p>Dec 2021</p> <p>Dec 2021, thereafter annually</p>	

		concerns/complaints regarding disability support and access provision.	Advice Centre, Deputy Director of HR		
1.6 Conduct a disability Access Audit across the College and ensure current infrastructure projects include accessibility considerations at the planning phase.	Feedback from staff and students has highlighted that certain areas of the College have restricted access. Legislation requires an anticipatory approach to accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of an accessible environment for staff, student and stakeholders. Employee engagement survey and student feedback indicate a high level of satisfaction amongst staff and students in having their access needs met. 	Dir of ISD/ EDC Chair, Director of Wellbeing and D & I Manager	Audit by December 2021	
1.7 Provide regular information, increase awareness and engagement of EDI via projects and events with staff and students on RVC Equality and Diversity initiatives and policies	In order to facilitate a culture of mutual respect and understanding staff and students need to be aware of progress on EDI projects, events and initiatives including when religious, faith and cultural events take place. Staff and students need to be aware of relevant policies and support/guidance available to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from future employee engagement, Athena SWAN and student surveys identify over 80% of respondents are aware of EDI initiatives and projects. Regular messages and updates on intranet/RVC Learn. EDI webpages are regularly revised and updated to provide correct, up to date and useful information and support. 	EDC Champions, Deputy Director of HR D&I Manager, Student Union President, Academic Registrar, Dir of LWB, Dir of Access and Head of Grad School D&I Manager	December 2021 Ongoing Ongoing	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI pages moved from HR to a College wide position. 	D&I Manager	September 2020	
1.8 Ensure EDI initiatives are informed by relevant work on StepChange framework, Environmental Sustainability WG, Staff Health and Wellbeing WG, the Access and Participation plan (APP), the RVC Charter, and the Strategic Plan.	Provides greater connection of EDI with the work of other committees across the RVC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI initiatives take account of work/progress made by other RVC committees and further support equality agenda. • Accurate cross-referencing of work streams and clear lines of accountability. 	Chair of EDC Dir of LWB, Academic Registrar Dir of ISD Chair of Student Development Committee College Secretary	Ongoing	
1.9 Continue to provide appropriate College resources to support equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and activities which create an inclusive learning and working environment.	To ensure equality objectives are successfully delivered on time and to meet the requirements such as Athena SWAN Action Plan and recommendations set out in the Gender Pay Gap reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitments to resource ED&I activities that have been: endorsed by CEC; are part of PSD operational plans and are part of this plan Sections 2, 3, 4. • Delivery of staff equality objectives, and subsequent action plans via departmental E&D action plans. 	Chair of EDC and CEC, PSD Directors Director of HR D&I Manager and Chair of EDC	Ongoing	

2. Commitment to meeting external and public sector requirements of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Responsibility	Timescale	Annual Progress Update
2.1 Continue to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.	Ensures RVC is legally compliant and meeting the requirements of Equality Act 2010.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No equality related legal challenge against RVC. All public sector equality duty requirements met in a timely fashion. Student satisfaction on Student Barometer, NSS. 	<p>EDC champions D&I Manager and Head of Advice Centre</p> <p>Everyone</p> <p>Director of LWB</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
2.2 Continue to promote and advance the use of Equality Analysis (Equality Impact Assessments) on all policies, procedures, services and functions.	RVC, policies, procedures and functions need to be impact assessed so that they do not unfairly disadvantage staff, students or stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff involved in policy and service development are trained on how to conduct EIA (Equality Analysis) and that all EIA's are recorded and accessible within department or service area. 	VP's, HOD's, Chair of EDC and D&I Manager	Ongoing	

2.3 Continue to work towards meeting the actions set out in the Athena SWAN Action Plan.	To advance gender equality at RVC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RVC maintains Organisational Bronze award and is in the position to work towards the Silver award. 	Chair of Athena SWAN (SAT) EDC champions and D&I Manager	November 2021	
2.4 Implement equality and diversity considerations relating to the Research Excellence Framework (REF).	Ensure staff are selected fairly, with clear guidance on how personal circumstances are to be taken into account.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection process is fair and transparent, no staff have been disadvantaged in the process and no successful appeals. 	VP for Research & Innovation Research Office	July 2020	
2.5 To continue to ensure formal tenders have an E&D policy and recognise RVC E&D policy.	To ensure as far as possible, that our commitment to E&D is extended to all activities, including those contracted-out to third parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All formal tenders have an E&D Policy and confirm that they will recognise RVC E&D policy. 	Head of Procurement	Ongoing	
2.6 Implement student outreach and recruitment strategies in order to meet targets specified in the Access and Participation plan (APP)	To ensure the RVC is able to recruit and support a diverse student body as outlined in the APP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the College's APP targets. 	Acting VP of Students, Director of Access, Head of Student Recruitment	Reviewed annually	

2.7 Ensure that the RVC website and learning resources for students are compliant and accessible as defined in the government legislation. Details of what we will complete to ensure this happens by the deadline of 20 September 2020 are outlined in the respective accessibility statements.	To address the accessibility of learning materials for students and for all public facing content on the RVC website to ensure compliance with the 2018 legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that RVC website content and all of the learning resources for students are compliant and accessible as defined by the legislation. • Accessibility audit and action plan for all learning content. 	Director of External Relations and Director of Learning and Wellbeing	Sept 2020	
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3. Promoting and embedding student equality, diversity and inclusion

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Responsibility	Timescale	Annual Progress Update
3.1 Implement EDI awareness raising events, campaigns, activities and forums for students.	Student survey results highlight underlying issues with equality awareness amongst student body. Develop and support a caring community for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various EDI awareness raising and training events to be implemented such as disability, gender, ethnicity and transgender. • Student feedback on Student barometer, NSS, highlight an increased student awareness and satisfaction level of EDI. 	SU President, SU E&D Rep Director of LWB, Academic Registrar, Head of Advice Centre Head of Graduate School and Chaplain	Updated annually	

3.2 Implement actions to increase disability disclosure rate for students. Review enrolment and disability disclosure processes to ensure support needs are identified at the earliest stage and are clearly communicated to course teams.	Promotion of early disclosure of disabilities so students can access appropriate support in a timely manner and reduce stress. Creation of a supportive environment where all feel comfortable in providing disability information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in disability disclosure rate for students at an earlier stage in their programme so they can access available support. 	Director of Access Director of LWB, Head of Advice Centre Academic Registrar	December 2023	
3.3 Develop inclusive policies for students to ensure all groups are represented and included.	Ensure that policies don't single out specific groups in order to promote an inclusive community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All developed and reviewed policies will be Equality Impact Assessed (Equality Analysis (see 2.3)). 	Director of Learning and Wellbeing and the Student Policy Working Group	By July 2020	

4. Promoting and embedding staff equality, diversity and inclusion

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Responsibility	Timescale	Annual Progress Update
4.1 Continue to provide, EDI online refresher training for existing staff and online training as part of staff induction.	To ensure RVC meets its obligations under Equality Act 2010, by continuing with refresher training for staff and as part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff complete online EDI training from 86% in 2018 to 95 % in 2022. 	Staff Development Manager and D&I Manager As above	Biennial Dec 2022	

<p>Ensure EDI training is up to date and reflects any trends and issues that emerge nationally and at the College. Ensure cultural awareness is embedded into EDI training</p> <p>Provide regular EDI briefing sessions to E&D Champions on a range of topics.</p>	<p>of staff induction. This will support our commitment to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>To raise the profile of the EDC champions within departments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is up to date and addresses relevant topics and issues emerging nationally and locally. • Completion of the compulsory online EDI training. • E&D Champions are equipped to provide general guidance on EDI related activities. Staff refer to their E&D Champion as a source of information or advice. 	<p>Staff Development and D&I Manager</p>	<p>September 2020, thereafter biennial</p>	
<p>4.2 Review and implement specific EDI training for Tutors, managers and supervisors to include cultural awareness.</p>	<p>Support from line managers/supervisors/tutors is key to ensuring good work/study environment in respect of equality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor training revised and re-launched with 80% completion rate for all existing managers/tutors and supervisors. • New managers complete this within probation period. • Increase in participation and the number of training 	<p>Head of Advice Centre; Educational Development Manager</p>	<p>By July 2021, thereafter review annually</p>	

		sessions focused on accessibility/diversity/inclusive teaching.			
4.3 Improve collection of relevant demographic staff data in line with Data Protection legislation to help identify diversity issues and monitor impact	We need to understand better the composition of our workforce, so that we can provide appropriate support and intervention if required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions are directly linked to our diverse workforce. 	HR Information Systems and Head of HR Operations	Dec 2022, thereafter biennial	
4.4 Continue to support parental leave through initiatives such as a buddy system for returning parents and continued provision of a central budget to cover parental leave.	To maintain a supportive working environment for staff returning from parental leave. The buddy system will support the transition of parents returning back into the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of central budget for family leave. Positive feedback from Athena SWAN survey and EES indicate that staff feel supported when returning to work. 	CEC and Head of Departments Chair of Athena SWAN SAT, Deputy Director and EDC Champions	Ongoing December 2021	
4.5 Investigate and provide positive action initiatives to increase profile of women and BAME staff within senior grades at the RVC.	Equality Monitoring reports have highlighted that proportionally women are more likely to be employed in roles covering grades 1-5 and under-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual equality monitoring data identifies there is an increase in the proportion of BAME and women within senior roles, e.g. grade 8 and 9. 	EDC, Staff Development Manager and D&I Manager	Ongoing, annual review	

	<p>represented within grades 8 and 9.</p> <p>Equality Monitoring reports highlighted an under-representation of BAME staff within senior positions at grade 8 and 9.</p>				
4.6 Conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (Equality Analysis) for each stage of the recruitment process to ensure that potential barriers for BAME applicants are removed	Annual Equal Monitoring Reports highlight that a lower proportion of BAME staff are shortlisted compared to 'white' staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of BAME staff shortlisted from 32.4% 2018 to 38% by Dec 23. 	Head of HR Operations, D&I Manager and Chair of EDC	Annually reported to Council and CEC By Dec 2023	
4.7 Improve RVC's external perception of a Disability Confident Employer (Level 3). By exploring outreach community activities.	Disabled staff are under-represented at the College. Therefore the College needs to be seen as an employer who is proactive and positive about supporting the local disabled community to access employment in order to attract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in applications from disabled applicants 5.5% in 2018 to 7% by 2023 and an increase in disabled staff profile from 3.6% in 2018 to 4.6% by 2023. 	D&I Manager and EDC Champions	December 2023	

	diverse range of talent.				
4.8 Promote greater awareness of hidden disabilities, and support provided by Government's 'Access to Work Scheme'.	In order to build a culture where staff feel comfortable and confident to inform and seek support to accommodate their access requirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are more aware of the 'Access to Work Scheme'. Feedback from local E&D action plans and EES highlights disabled staff have a positive experience of 'Access to Work'. 	E&D Champions Deputy Director of HR and D&I Manager	Dec 2020, thereafter ongoing	
4.9 To continue to promote family leave and flexible working policies including support available.	To support staff wellbeing, caring responsibilities and work life balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athena SWAN 2020 survey highlight 80% awareness of family leave and flexible working policies and the support available to staff. 	Deputy Director of HR, Employee Relations Manager, D&I Manager and E&D Champions	Ongoing Action	
4.10 Launch and promote 'Principles of Flexible Working'.	Flexible working is seen as an integral part of valuing EDI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in approved formal flexible working requests. All jobs open to flexible working unless justified. 	Deputy Director of HR, D&I Manager and HR Operations Manager	May 2020	
4.11 To assist in establishing EDI informal support networks for under-represented staff groups.	A need to be able to support and empower staff from underrepresented groups to have a safe space to connect and share ideas and experiences in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal staff networks are established and well. 	D&I Manager and E&D Champions	Ongoing	

	order to advance the EDI agenda.				
4.12 Complete Equal Pay Audit and develop appropriate action plan to address pay gap issues.	Ensure equal pay for equal work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No pay gap issues identified within grades. 	Deputy Director of HR D&I Manager Chair of EDC	By October 2020 Thereafter every 3 years	
4.13 Develop a policy for Transgender staff.	Need to raise awareness about issues faced by transgender staff. To ensure transgender staff feel fully supported in their workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future surveys highlight transgender staff feel better integrated and supported into RVC life. 	ED Champions	June 2020	