



## **Equality Objectives 2015 – 2019**

Introduction	4
The Legal Context	4
Summary of 2014 'Equality at RVC' Survey	5
RVC Equality Objectives	12

## **Our target audience**

This document is aimed at:

- Students (present & future, undergraduate & postgraduate)
- Staff (present & future)
- Visitors
- Clients
- Relevant external stakeholders

General information about Equality at RVC is available on our web-pages:

[www.rvc.ac.uk/about/our-people/human-resources/equality](http://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](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/about/our-people/human-resources/equality).

The standard copy is in minimum 11 point Palatino Linotype 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**        [hr@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:hr@rvc.ac.uk)

**Tel**            **01707 666400**

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

## Introduction

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is the largest and longest-established vet school in the English speaking world. As one of the world's leading specialist veterinary and biological science research institutions, the RVC brings together talented individuals; all of whom share a passion for human and animal health and welfare. This diversity of staff and students means we have to be mindful of our obligations to treat people fairly irrespective of the nine protected characteristics as governed by the Equality Act 2010. We do this through ensuring our policies and procedures are robust and are implemented in a fair and equitable manner.

The RVC implemented its first Single Equality Scheme in 2010/11 as a mechanism to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion were at the heart of all RVC activities.

This document builds on the work undertaken since 2010/11 and replaces our single scheme which will help us to further our commitment to equality and diversity through the development of a set of key equality objectives (covering the period 2015 to 2019). The objectives listed have been developed by using local drivers, evidence from base data collection and analysis and information attained from staff and students through the 2014 'Equality at RVC' survey.

Progress against the objectives will be managed by the Equality Strategy Group (ESG) and reported to the Senior Management Group (SMG) on an annual basis through the annual equal opportunity report, with a review of the objectives at two year point to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

## The Legal Context

The Equality Act was introduced in October 2010 to harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. It intended to do this by creating a general public duty, extending the range of lawful positive action, to overcome or minimise a disadvantage arising from a protected characteristic and extending the circumstances in which a person is protected against discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of a protected characteristic.

The nine protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The general public duty requires HEIs to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Further information about the equality act is available at:

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

## Equality Objectives – 2015 to 2019

Following the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010, a key aspect was the requirement for the RVC to produce equality objectives. The aim of the objectives is to develop, enhance and embed equality and diversity into everyday life at the RVC.

Using the results of the 2014 'Equality at RVC' survey and the summary of the 2010-2014 Single Equality Scheme, the Equality Objectives on pages 6 to 9 (covering the period 2015 to 2019) have been developed. A traffic light system has been adopted by the ESG to show the priority level of each objective as follows:

RED	Identified as objectives which require priority action
ORANGE	Identified as objectives which require medium term planning
GREEN	Identified as objectives which require regular monitoring

As previously mentioned, progress against the objectives will be managed by the ESG and reported to the Senior Management Group (SMG) on an annual basis through the annual equal opportunity report, with a review of the objectives every two years to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

## RVC Equality Objectives 2015 – 2019

### 1. General

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Priority	Responsibility	Timescale
1.1 Ensure E&D underpins all decision making at the RVC	Shows E&D is embedded into the culture of the RVC	E&D added as a standing item in agendas of key RVC committee meetings. Each strategic RVC committee includes a member of the ESG ESG has members from all area of college	GREEN	Heads of Depts. Chair of ESG All Committee Chairs	By July 2016  Ongoing
1.2 Equality Strategy Group (ESG) to be recognised as an official RVC committee	To ensure equality objectives are delivered and E&D is embedded into the culture of the RVC	ESG confirmed as a formal committee with a defined reporting structure in place	GREEN	Chief Operating Officer SMG	By December 2015
1.3 Review of strategic committees to allow for staff to participate in where they would not normally have an opportunity with the ultimate aim to improve diversity on such committees	Strategic committees/groups to reflect RVC diversity profile and provides development opportunities for staff to be involved in senior committees	Strategic committees membership including SMG amended to allow selection of staff out with role requirements	GREEN	SMG	By December 2016
1.4 Appropriate College resources are allocated to support equality and diversity activities	To ensure equality objectives are successfully delivered on time	Resources agreed (including financial), to appropriately support dedicated Equality & Diversity activity within HR to deliver equality objectives, data collection, analysis and training (either within current establishment or outwith)	GREEN	Director of Finance, Director of HR and SMG	By August 2016

1.5 Budget to be made available for departments - to utilise for family leave such as temporary replacement posts to cover parental leave	Need for departments to cover family leave arrangements - returning staff will feel supported when they return to work as well as not placing unnecessary burden on existing staff	Specific central budget agreed for family leave and accessible to departments	GREEN	Director of Finance and SMG	By August 2016
1.6 Review ESG membership and responsibilities	Ensure membership and responsibilities are appropriate	Membership/responsibilities adjusted/assigned as appropriate	GREEN	Chair of ESG	Annually

## 2. Communication

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Priority	Responsibility	Timescale
2.1 Increase awareness of RVC Equality and Diversity (E&D) initiatives and policies	Ensure staff and students are aware of policies and available support/guidance	Creation of E&D blog/newsletter Regular messages on intranet/RVC Learn	ORANGE	Chair of ESG Student Union President	By January 2016  Ongoing
2.2 Revise E&D webpages	Will ensure the E&D web-pages provide correct, up to date and useful information and support	Web-pages updated using positive feedback from staff, students and clients	GREEN	Chair of ESG	By April 2016
2.3 Provide regular information to highlight E&D projects and events	Ensure staff and students are aware of progress on E&D projects (e.g. Athena SWAN) and when religious, faith and cultural events take place	Roadshows run and well attended Produce diversity calendar and made available for new starters (staff/students) at induction/fresher's week	ORANGE	College Chaplain Athena SWAN Group Director of HR Academic Registrar Head of Grad. School	By January 2016  Ongoing

### 3. Processes

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Priority	Responsibility	Timescale
3.1 Continue to meet obligations under Equality Act 2010	Ensures RVC is legally compliant and meeting requirements of Equality Act 2010	No equality related legal challenge against RVC	GREEN	All Chair of ESG	Ongoing
3.2 Implement Equality Impact Assessment process	RVC policies and procedures need to be impact assessed so that they do not unfairly disadvantage staff or students	Clear guidelines created Central administrative departments policies and procedures impact assessed with no equality issues identified prior to roll out across the RVC	ORANGE	Chair of ESG	By July 2016  Ongoing
3.3 Achieve Organisation Athena SWAN Bronze Award	Promotes commitment to gender equality at RVC  Potential link to future research funding	RVC achieves Organisation Bronze award and at least 2 departmental award submissions are completed.  Access to development opportunities available to all regardless of gender	GREEN	Chair of Athena SWAN Group	By April 2017
3.4 Implement equality considerations relating to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) when guidance available	Ensure staff are selected fairly, with clear guidance on how circumstances are to be taken into account	Clear guidelines produced Increase in number of staff with circumstances returned	GREEN	VP for Research & Innovation Research Office	By July 2018
3.5 All external contractors to recognise RVC E&D policies as part of any tender process	Need to ensure external contractors recognise RVC E&D policies before a contract is awarded as part of procurement process	All contractors (existing and new) confirm that they will recognise RVC E&D policies	ORANGE	Head of Procurement	By December 2015 for new  By July 2016 for existing



#### 4. Staff and Students

Objective	Why is this needed?	Success measure	Priority	Responsibility	Timescale
4.1 Implement E&D training for students	Survey results highlight underlying issues with equality awareness amongst student body	Training implemented, possibly incorporated within existing course modules  Inclusion of appropriate talks during INSET days focussing on the understanding of learning differences	ORANGE	Student Union President Academic Registrar Head of Graduate School	By September 2016
4.2 Implement regular E&D refresher training for existing staff	To ensure RVC meets its obligations under Equality Act, introduction of refresher training for staff will support our commitment	Refresher training implemented and 100% of staff complete the training.  Increase number of disability awareness training courses as well as the inclusion of appropriate talks during INSET days focussing on the understanding of learning differences	GREEN	Director of HR  Head of Academic Development	By January 2016
4.3 Implement revised E&D training/support available to line managers/supervisors/tutors	Survey highlighted support from line managers/supervisors/tutors is key to ensuring good working/study environment in respect of equality	Training revised and re-launched with 100% completion rate for all existing managers/tutors New managers to complete within probation period	ORANGE	Director of HR Advice Centre Manager	By July 2017

4.4 Review support and guidance available for women with the aim to increase opportunities in applying for/being promoted to senior roles	Data analysis highlights that proportionally women are more likely to be employed in roles covering Grades 1-5	Further analysis of data available to determine if gender balance at all grades is appropriate Increase proportion of women within senior roles	ORANGE	Director of HR	By December 2016  Ongoing
4.5 Promote disability provision	Survey highlights need to improve disability provision available, in particular for staff	Disability provision for staff is on par with that available for students Clear guidance produced highlighting resources available	ORANGE	Director of HR Advice Centre Manager	By December 2016
4.6 Implement actions to increase disability disclosure rate for staff and students	Data analysis identified low numbers of staff had identified they had a disability – possibly suggests staff do not feel comfortable in providing this information	Creation of supporting environment where staff and students feel comfortable in providing disability information	ORANGE	Director of HR Advice Centre Manager	By December 2015  Ongoing
4.7 Continue to investigate creation of on-site childcare facilities. In the interim, actively source appropriate alternative options in local area (covering Hawkshead and Camden)	Accessibility to childcare facilities has been raised in numerous surveys – work is in progress looking at on-site facilities however alternative options should be identified in the interim	On-site childcare facilities provided at both campuses however if it is not possible, reasons to be clearly communicated to the college community and staff and students provided with options such as available local facilities, including those which have out of hours facilities	ORANGE	SMG Director HR Director of Estates	By September 2015  By December 2016 (to complete investigation for provision of on-site facilities)

4.8 Provide suitable room to enable returning mothers to express milk	Survey highlighted issue with no space currently available for returning mothers to express milk – given the RVC staff and student profile, this would show a commitment to supporting women.	Private space provided on both campuses which is solely used for the purpose of expressing milk – with appropriate facilities made available i.e. a lockable fridge.	GREEN	Director of Estates	By September 2015
4.9 To promote Family Leave policies including support available	To raise awareness about policies and benefits/support available, including new Shared Parental Leave Policy	Future surveys highlight 100% awareness of policies and support available	GREEN	Director of HR	By April 2016  Ongoing
4.10 Create 'forums' of appropriate groups which would report to the ESG	A forum for staff and students of a particular equality characteristic to allow them to discuss issues/needs and raise them through official channels	Sub groups set up and first meeting held with outcomes reported to the ESG	ORANGE	Chair of ESG	By December 2016
4.11 Implement actions to increase the proportion of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) applicants who receive job offers	Annual equal opportunity report highlighted that the offer rate across all jobs was 9% (of the number of applications) however for BAME applicants it was 4%	Analyse data in more detail to clarify reason for the gap. Increase in the proportion of BAME applicants who are offered a job to match other equality characteristics to increase staff diversity profile	ORANGE	Director of HR Chair of ESG	By December 2017  Ongoing
4.12 Complete Equal Pay Audit and develop appropriate action plan to address pay gap issues	Ensure equal pay for equal work with actions suggested for any pay disparity identified	No major pay gap issues identified	ORANGE	Director of HR Chair of ESG	By July 2015  Ongoing
4.13 Explicitly welcome formal flexible working arrangements/requests for all staff. This will embed a culture which supports formal flexible working arrangements	Survey highlighted flexible working/variable work patterns is seen as important when valuing equality and diversity	Increase in formal flexible working requests which are approved which includes any short term arrangements. Training available for Managers on how to handle flexible working requests	GREEN	Director of HR All Departments	By December 2016  Ongoing

4.14 Review support available to trans-staff and students	Need to raise awareness about issues faced by trans staff and students	Future surveys highlight trans staff and students feel better integrated into RVC life	ORANGE	Chair of ESG	By January 2017
4.15 Record data on Religion & Belief and Sexual Orientation	Need to ensure data is available to inform decision making Likely that requirement to record data will be introduced to comply with statutory reporting i.e. Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)	Data is recorded and reported annually in equal opportunities monitoring report	GREEN	Chair of ESG Director of HR Advice Centre Manager	By July 2017  Ongoing
4.16 Ensure E&D initiatives are informed by RVC Charter, Wellbeing Review and work undertaken by the Associate Dean (Learning and Student Experience) and Student Development Committee	Provides greater connection of E&D with the work of other committees across the RVC	E&D initiatives take account of work/progress made by other RVC committees and further support equality agenda	GREEN	Chair of ESG Assoc. Dean (L&SE) Academic Registrar Chair of Student Development Committee	Ongoing