



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Royal Veterinary College (the College) is committed to the promotion of equal opportunity for all staff so that they are recruited, trained, appraised, and promoted, and for all students so that they are selected, registered, educated and appraised on the basis of their merits and abilities regardless of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, nationality, pregnancy or maternity status, religious belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The College operates a number of policies, toolkits and procedures with this aim in mind, including: the Single Equality Scheme, Management Toolkits (encompassing the Recruitment Toolkit, the Appraisal Toolkit and the Managing People Toolkits), the Staff Training and Development Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy as well as the Equal Opportunities Policy itself. These policies/toolkits can be downloaded from the Human Resources website or obtained by contacting Human Resources.

The law relating to equal opportunities is governed by the Equality Act 2010. The core provisions of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010 (including the introduction of the general Public Equality and Specific Duties from April 2011 – please refer to the College’s Single Equality Scheme for more details relating to the equality duties and how these will be implemented at the College).

The aim of the Regulations is to prevent either direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on grounds of a person having any of the protected characteristics (listed above).

The College will take active steps to promote equality and value diversity by:

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not
- Having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Ensuring that the College continues to welcome and support people from diverse backgrounds across all sections of the community
- Promoting an open, inclusive and diverse environment where individuals are valued
- Using our Single Equality Scheme as a mechanism to create, monitor and achieve our equality objectives
- Publishing this policy, statistical information and other results of monitoring to show greater transparency in our aim to create more opportunities for under-represented groups

Recruitment and Selection

All recruitment and selection will be based on appointment of the best candidate for the post (for staff) and the best applicant for the course (for students) irrespective of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, nationality, pregnancy or maternity status, religious belief, sex or sexual orientation. For staff, the aim is for the workforce of the College to reflect the make-up of potential candidates from the appropriate recruitment market, be that local, national or international in character. For students, the aim is for the College to promote equality of opportunity in its students' selection procedures.

Appraisal, Assessment, Promotion and Grading

For staff, the College is committed to ensuring that decisions over promotion and grading are made fairly and consistently and on objective grounds dependent upon the capability of the individual and the requirements of the post. A HERA Job Evaluation process forms the basis for all grading of posts within the College to ensure that grading is fair and consistent. For students, the College is committed to ensuring that assessment processes are fair and consistent and that there is equality of opportunity for all students to be educated to the best of their abilities. The College is committed to ensuring its assessment procedures are anonymous as far as possible and are seen not to discriminate against any student.

Staff Training/Student Support

The College is committed to ensuring that all staff have equal access to training and development events. Training will be based upon the needs of the individual in order to fulfil the requirements of the post. The Appraisal System used within the College for all staff provides a mechanism for identifying individual training requirements.

For students, the College is committed to ensuring its student support and guidance mechanisms are available to all students.

Complaints

Staff and students may use the appropriate mechanisms in place to make a complaint. Any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation is unacceptable and behaviour of this kind could result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator.

Staff may use the Grievance Policy, or the Dignity at Work Policy if this is more appropriate, to make a complaint about discriminatory conduct. Employees who raise a complaint under the Grievance Policy or the Dignity at Work Policy will not suffer any penalty for doing so unless the complaint is shown to be unfounded and frivolous or malicious in nature.

For students, the College is committed to ensuring that the Student Grievance and Discipline Procedures are seen to be fair to all students regardless of any of the protected equality characteristics.

The College also undertakes to ensure that no student is discriminated against if they make a complaint, are thought to have made a complaint or have supported someone else who has made a complaint of discrimination under the Grievance Procedure.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the promotion of this policy is as follows:

- **Governing Body** – the College Council have overall responsibility for monitoring the College's progress in meeting the general and specific equality duties.
- **Senior Management Group and Equality Strategy Group** – are responsible for approving and ensuring adherence of this policy as well as ensuring the College meets the general and specific equality duties.
- **Senior Managers** – are responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented within their areas of responsibility. This includes supporting and encouraging staff to undertake training and taking action against staff where discrimination, victimisation or harassment is suspected.
- **All staff and students** – are responsible for promoting equality of opportunity. All staff and students are expected to adhere to the content of this policy including participating in training and reporting suspected discrimination, victimisation or harassment. Instances of failure to follow this policy or obstructing the College's efforts in meeting its obligations, will be dealt with seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with College procedures.

Data Collection, Publication and Review

The College collects from current employees/students and potential employees information about age, disability, ethnic origin, gender and marital status. As well as being used to monitor the recruitment, selection and promotion processes at the College, the information is also used to help devise actions for the College to promote equality of opportunity. An equal opportunities monitoring report is published annually on the Colleges website.

It may be subject to review and amendment from time to time in light of changes in legislation or perceived problems of operation.