

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029

1. Introduction

The Royal Society's mission is to promote excellence in science and the application of science for the benefit of humanity. A diverse and inclusive scientific workforce is central to the achievement of the Society's mission – bringing together the widest range of talents, backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences to maximise scientific innovation and creativity.

The Royal Society recognises the importance of diversity and inclusion in driving scientific excellence, innovation and societal impact. As a leading scientific institution, our role in promoting and upholding equality, diversity and inclusion is multifaceted and essential to our mission. Our EDI strategy is designed to ensure that all individuals regardless of their background, identity or circumstances have equitable opportunities to thrive.

This updated strategy builds on the Society's previous diversity and inclusion strategy, identifying clear areas of focus and building on existing successful initiatives with the overall aim of widening participation in the research and innovation system.

It is a support document to the Royal Society's overarching strategic plan 2022-2027 that states that the Society will take an integrated approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion, placing these themes at the centre of all its work, informed by their importance in driving the quality of science and decision-making and that the Society will work for greater equality, diversity, and inclusion in the scientific workforce at all levels.

2. Strategic Priorities

The strategy is broken down into five sections:

- **Ensuring that diversity and inclusion are at the centre of the Society's activities.**
- **Encouraging more applications to the Society's grant schemes from outstanding researchers from underrepresented groups.**
- **Supporting the pipeline of young people from minority groups into STEM careers.**
- **Breaking down the barriers to progression in STEM for researchers from underrepresented groups.**
- **Recognising the achievements of researchers from minority groups.**

i) **Ensuring the diversity and inclusion are at the centre of the Society's activities**

Work programmes

There are a range of initiatives delivered by teams across the Society that have a direct impact on diversity and inclusion. These include policy projects across different teams, as well as activities delivered by the Diversity and Inclusion team, which are set out below.

Diversity and inclusion are incorporated into the day-to-day activities of the Society.

Activities include:

- **Ensuring diverse membership of working groups, committees, and panels**
- **Securing diverse nominations to the Society's medals and awards**
- **The collection of diversity data from activities undertaken by the Society**
- **Use of diverse imagery and inclusive language to promote the Society's work**
- **Ensuring an inclusive and welcoming environment for scientists and researchers from all backgrounds, fostering a culture of respect and collaboration.**

Fellowship

The Society's strategic plan sets out a specific programme of work to ensure that the Fellowship is representative of scientific excellence in all its forms and contexts. The plan includes actively securing nominations for strong candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Employees

It is important that all employees feel welcome and included at the Society. We have an active programme of work and a range of policies and initiatives to support this aim. Staff have access to training courses, staff networks, and we celebrate cultural days and anniversaries that represent the wide range of people working at the Society. There is also a staff diversity and inclusion group from across the Society to help advise and coordinate diversity and inclusion work.

Accessibility

There is an ongoing programme of work to make the Royal Society a more accessible to visitors and employees. In recent years, the Society has completed improvement works to enable better access for disabled people and anyone with a long-term condition.

The Society occupies a Grade I listed building in Central London the property now achieves a good standard of accessibility throughout. We also undertake regular accessibility audits alongside health and safety audits, prioritising actions to make further improvements.

The Society will continue to seek feedback and ideas to ensure that we can accommodate people who wish to visit the building in person or attend events online.

The Society's website has been designed to be AA accessible and we will continue to maintain this level of accessibility across the site.

The Society's history of science programme

The Royal Society aims to be open and transparent about the activities of the organization and its Fellows in previous centuries. Royal Society Library staff continue to update cataloguing practices and authority files so that, as a starting point, Fellows connected to colonialism, slavery and scientific racism can be more easily identified. In addition, the Society is supporting PhD students looking at specific aspects of the Society's past.

We recognise there is much more work to be done, and identifying underacknowledged or erased individuals in the history of science can be difficult. Throughout our history the involvement of people from Black, Indigenous and minority ethnic backgrounds have frequently been erased. The Society will continue to look for examples from the past to highlight people from minority groups who have contributed to the advancement of science without the appropriate recognition.

Unconscious-bias programme

We will continue to build on our previous work around unconscious bias. We will review and update our approach as necessary, to maintain the impact of the work.

ii) Encouraging more applications to the Society's grant schemes from outstanding researchers from underrepresented groups.

The Society will continue to implement activities that aim to broaden participation in its funding programmes. These activities include:

- Benchmark applicants to its grant's schemes against the potential applicant pool to understand where underrepresentation is occurring.
- Establish an advisory group of research fellows to support the development of the grant's diversity and inclusion work.
- Consult with key stakeholders and members with the research community as new ideas develop.
- Review the Society's policies and procedures against good practice and amend schemes to make them more inclusive as appropriate.
- Consider diversity and inclusion within an overall review of the grants assessment process.
- Continue to pilot new activities.

iii) Supporting the pipeline of young people from underrepresented groups into STEM careers.

We need to ensure that studying and progressing in STEM is open and welcoming to everyone, irrespective of background or existing connections with science.

The Society is keen to encourage and maintain engagement amongst young people from underrepresented groups who are studying STEM subjects at A level or first-degree levels.

In recent years, the Society has supported mentoring schemes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or Black heritage. Royal Society research fellows have volunteered as mentors and following programme assessments, we will continue to support mentoring programmes for young people from underrepresented groups.

Alongside the mentoring schemes, the Society will seek to promote its career road map by reaching out to the careers guidance sector in 6th forms, FE colleges and universities and by working with organisations that support young people from minority groups.

There are also work programmes being undertaken by the education policy and schools engagement teams that address diversity and inclusion matters.

iv) Breaking down the barriers to progression in STEM for researchers from underrepresented groups.

We will continue to take an evidence-based approach to investigate the barriers that prevent researchers from minority groups from progressing their STEM careers at the same rate as their peers in majority groups. We have commissioned HESA data to better understand where underrepresentation is occurring. We also plan to update our HESA data reports every few years to assess any changes over time.

In the last few years, the Society has focused on work looking at researchers from minority ethnic groups and disabled researchers. Insights from this work led to the introduction of our Career Development Fellowships, the development of the Career Road Map and a report looking at the experiences of researchers with disabilities. Further work is underway to address the challenges faced by these groups.

We will continue to explore the potential to look at other areas of underrepresentation.

v) Recognising the achievements of researchers from underrepresented groups.

The Society has developed several activities that highlight the achievements of researchers from minority groups and we intend to continue and expand this work by:

- Highlighting individual case studies or blogs to mark key anniversaries or focus days, weeks, or months.
- Recognising contributions to advancing diversity and inclusion from individuals and groups through the awarding of medals or awards. These include the Rosalind Franklin Award, the Athena Prize, and the Research Culture Award.

The Society will also look to identify additional opportunities to highlight the achievements of researchers from minority groups.

3. How we will work

How we will deliver the Diversity and Inclusion strategy:

Data and reporting

We will continue to collect and report on diversity data from all our activities. Where possible, we will look to benchmark the Society's data against a relevant data set to establish how the Society is performing against others.

We will look to commission or access data that helps inform the development of our programmes, particularly to understand where underrepresentation is occurring.

All activities will set out how we will assess the impact of our work from the outset. This evaluation will be included in the reporting to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Council as appropriate.

Seeking feedback and engagement

An important part of how we work will be to consult and engage with members of the relevant minority groups to give us advice and to help design our programmes in a meaningful and supportive way. This has been an important part of our ethnicity and disability work to date and will continue into this new strategy.

Whilst taking this approach, we will be mindful not to add to the burden sometimes faced by individuals from underrepresented groups who often undertake EDI responsibilities without acknowledgement. We will also investigate the potential to better recognise their contributions towards EDI.

Working with partners

To amplify the impact of our work, we will collaborate with partners working in the same areas that also share our objectives.

4. Governance

The Royal Society Diversity and Inclusion Committee, a standing Committee of Council, will oversee the delivery of a programme of activities aligned with this strategy.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee has formed two sub-groups to address the barriers faced by disabled scientists and scientists from minority ethnic groups.

The Committee will keep under review, and make recommendations to the Society's Council on, the Society's diversity and inclusion strategy.

The Committee will provide an annual report to Council including diversity data across all the Society's activities and an update on the implementation of the Strategy.