

Diversity strategy

2015 – 2018

Introduction

This strategy sets out, for 2015 – 2018, how the Royal Society will use its convening power and leadership, in partnership with others, to increase diversity in STEM¹ and build a more inclusive scientific community. It builds on the achievements of the four year BIS-funded STEM Diversity Programme 2011 – 2015, in addition to other activities of the Royal Society, other learned societies and related professional bodies.

Diversity is an essential tenet of modern society, but also provides a key part of the Royal Society's mission to recognise, promote and support increased excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This is because a diverse and inclusive scientific workforce draws from the widest range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences thereby maximising innovation and creativity in science for the benefit of humanity. This is important, for example, in order to increase UK competitiveness and prosperity.

The Society is concerned with excellent science wherever and by whomever it is done and is committed to increasing diversity in STEM by seeking out participation from underrepresented groups, in order to build and develop a world in which studying and working in science are open to all.

As the UK's national academy of science, engineering, technology and mathematics the Society believes that it has a particular responsibility to ensure that diversity and inclusion are embedded across all of its activities and is part of the culture of the organisation. As part of its commitment to increasing diversity in STEM the Society will actively seek out excellent scientists from underrepresented groups and encourage a more diverse population to be interested and engaged in science.

This strategy covers external-facing projects and activities as well as all major Society activities including, but not exclusively limited to:

- Election to the Fellowship;
- Recognising and supporting the work of outstanding scientists through our medals, awards and prizes and grants schemes;
- Scientific discussion meetings;
- Public engagement activities; and
- Independent policy work including education policy and education outreach work.

1. This strategy refers to both science and STEM. Science should be taken to mean all careers and disciplines related to science, technology, engineering and maths.

Strategic objectives

The overall guiding principle for the strategy is: 'Science for all' – creating an environment where anyone who has or is considering a career in science is encouraged, supported, welcomed and has an equal chance to excel.

The Society recognises that individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds, certain ethnic minorities, women, and disabled people are all currently under-represented in education, training and employment related to STEM. The Society will look to identify and remove barriers to their participation and success recognising that as an employer the Society's policies cover all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. There is less information available regarding representation from other protected characteristics in STEM but it is anticipated that good practice can be translated across groups and championed as of benefit to all.

Strategic objective 1

Maintain a culture within the Society that encourages and promotes diversity and inclusion.

- Ensure that the Society does everything it can to promote and encourage diversity amongst its own staff, the Fellowship, its grant schemes and all aspects of the Society's work.

Strategic objective 2

Identify and address barriers to participation and success in STEM.

- Seek to understand and remove barriers to entry, progression and retention within the scientific workforce and work with others to address the issues raised.

Strategic objective 3

Work in partnership to maximise the effectiveness of diversity initiatives across the scientific community.

- Continue to work closely with other academies, learned societies and organisations across the scientific community on diversity initiatives.

- Provide the secretariat to and (as a member) support the work of:
 - The Athena Forum, an independent committee which provides an expert voice on issues of women's career progression and their representation in STEMM²; and
 - The STEMM Disability Advisory Committee, a cross-STEMM collaborative group of professional bodies and learned societies that aims to strengthen the inclusion of disabled people in STEMM education and employment.

Strategic objective 4

Recognise and champion the achievements of a wide range of scientists from underrepresented groups.

- Recognise and champion the achievements of a wide range of scientists from underrepresented groups to:
 - Inspire young people to consider a career in science and to see STEM subjects as a route to a wider range of careers;
 - Inspire scientists from underrepresented groups currently working in STEM to stay and succeed in science; and
 - Show adults not currently working in science that it is never too late to consider a career in science.

Governance

The Diversity Committee, a standing Committee of Council, will oversee the delivery of a programme of activities to be undertaken by the Society that is aligned with this strategy.

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