

School of Life Sciences

DRAFT STRATEGY

2019 – 2025

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

What will the School do to contribute to the University's four EDI goals? (please refer to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – Inclusive Sussex).

Equal

- An overarching vision is a true culture of inclusivity, with the School doing all it can to support career progression for everyone.

We will:

- Achieve equality of female representation at all School-supported seminar series and events, and a fairer representation of all protected groups.
- On all school committees (student and staff), achieve representation that reflects the diversity of our staff/student groups; invitations and job descriptions for specific roles will make this explicit.
- Commit to equality of opportunity for those joining the School (student admissions and interview committees), at every step, including e.g.
 - inclusive language and unconscious bias training for all School members assessing applications and conducting interviews;
 - overhauling job adverts/descriptions in line with best EDI practice.
- Strive towards equality of attainment for those belonging to and leaving the School, including employment outcomes for our students and career progression for our employees. The aim will again be to secure fair opportunities, and this will include e.g.
 - surveying attainment gaps for students across protected characteristics, for instance those belonging to ethnic minorities, whether UK, EU or overseas;
 - ensuring those students' educational experience has the required added value to reduce any disproportionate attrition;
 - providing financial support for students whose background prevents them taking part in opportunities such as field trips;
 - an appraisal and promotions policy with transparent and clear rules for all staff, including academic, professional and technical services, and with a system that looks across the board at salaries in the light of gender and protected characteristics, and provides opportunities to discuss personal and carer circumstances at appraisal.

Work to remove any barriers to inclusion of people with protected characteristics invited to School seminars and events, including additional funds for special travel requirements (e.g. due to a disability) or carer support, making this explicit on invitations.

Diverse

We will:

- Put robust systems in place to ensure our School culture is fair and seen to be fair, including transparent workload allocation and an improved and clear system for enforcing dignity and respect, and reporting and monitoring harassment.
- Work with Widening Participation and local communities to support groups currently under-represented in science.

- Encourage a healthy culture of diversity of Life Sciences by, among others,
 - reviewing diversity and EDI data at senior management level on an annual basis, hearing from stakeholders and external experts and monitoring initiatives;
 - ensuring all promotional (internal and external) materials and public School activities include representatives from a range of backgrounds and experiences.

Accessible

We will:

- Commit to remove the physical barriers on our estate, ensuring access for people with disabilities.
- Utilise best practice in TEL to support students who cannot always make it on to campus (e.g. due to physical/mental disabilities).
- Ensure all announcements and online/written/other material are produced in accessible English (to cater for students, prospective students and visitors regardless of origin) and in accessible formats (e.g. easy links to large print/screen readers).
- Ensure all staff who have declared a disability/special working requirement have a trained mentor who can support them.

Flexible

We will:

- Promote a positive flexible working structure for staff, e.g. with clear instructions on how to apply for carer-friendly hours and a streamlined pipeline from HoS through School office to ensure consistent timetabling.
- Include an explicit section on flexible working options/EDI needs in revised yearly appraisals for all staff.
- Commit to smooth the return to work of employees on extended carers' leave by providing clear and transparent policies. Policies for academic and research staff will seek to avoid damage to their career progression by minimising long-term lags in lab work.
- Set aside funding to support researchers with carer responsibilities to present their work at conferences and prepare pilot data for grants.
- Explicitly include EDI duties as part of the description of roles of our professional services, ensuring that management of these commitments is properly supported.