

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Policy, practice, process or service title:	BVSci Admissions Policy
Policy, practice, process or service lead/ owner:	SVM
Others involved in EqlA assessment group	SVM Head of Education SVM Programme Director BVSci Admissions Lead
Policy, practice, process or service implementation date:	30/11/2023

1 Framing the policy, practice, process or service

1.1 Briefly describe the outcomes, aims and purpose of the policy, practice, process or service:

The key outcome of this policy is that SRUC SVM has an admissions policy that is equitable and fair for all applicants. The main aim of the policy is to describe an admissions process for the BVSci that will meet the mission aims of the school. The purpose is to describe the processes required for successful application to the programme.

1.2 Is the policy, practice, process or service new or being changed, reviewed or stopped?

This is a new policy for the School of Veterinary Medicine, specifically for the BVSci programme.

1.3 Who is affected by this policy, practice, process or service?

This policy will affect anyone thinking of making an application to SRUC SVM for the BVSci programme.

This will include potential applicants and those providing support and guidance to individuals (advisors/guidance staff, parents).

Current students on gateway courses (HND RAH) will also benefit from an understanding about progression to the programme.

SRUC staff will benefit from understanding how the policy works, their role in admissions and ensure a consistent and transparent admissions process.

1.4 Are there any other SRUC policies that may be affected by this policy, practice, process or service?

N/A

2 Evidence relevant to the policy, practice, process or service including consultation

The information you gather in this section will:

- help you to understand the importance of your policy, practice, process or service for different equality groups,
- inform the depth of equality impact assessment you need to do (this should be proportional to the potential impact on equality groups), and
- provide justification and an audit trail behind your decisions, including where it is agreed an equality impact assessment is not required.

2.1 Evidence: Set out in the table what you know about the experiences of people in terms of each equality group. Consider the diversity within each group (e.g. experiences of people from different religions or faiths) as well as the differences between groups. There may also be cumulative barriers experienced by people when you look at more than one group together (e.g. experiences of women of different minority ethnic groups, so the intersectional impact of sex and race).

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy, practice, process or service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
Age	Costs of Studying Veterinary Medicine - The Medic Portal Mature students Veterinary Medicine - The Student Room	<p>Applicants/students working to same policy regardless of type of entry.</p> <p>Policy mentions in specific terms – mature students; the cost of studying veterinary medicine as a UK graduate has historically been quoted as cost prohibitive. UK students opting to study veterinary medicine as a second degree need to pay fees equivalent to International students. The requirement for EMS placements, often away from home can also impact mature students with families or dependents.</p>
Disability	RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals RCVS Diversity and Inclusion Group Strategy - Professionals	<p>Included within policy that applicants should contact the Admissions Team to discuss support requirements that may be required to attend interview.</p> <p>Ability to meet regulatory bodies core competencies is a key aspect of the BVSci. Not all disabilities will be able to have adequate adjustments in place to meet these requirements. It is stated in the Equality act that where professional bodies require certain professional competencies that are appropriate then adjustments may not be offered or possible. Not all applicants will declare Additional Support Needs at application stage although they will be encouraged to do so, there will be alternative points throughout the admissions process for applicants to disclose and discuss requirements.</p>
Race		<p>No evidence of any impact.</p>
Sex	The 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Profession - Professionals (rcvs.org.uk) RCVS Diversity and Inclusion Group Strategy - Professionals	<p>Policy includes wording that we welcome application from underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Veterinary degree courses in the UK tend to have a gender split towards female applicants SVM admission policy hopes to appeal to all genders.</p>
Gender Reassignment		<p>Policy clearly states SRUC does not discriminate against protected characteristics. Policy is written using gender neutral words.</p>

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy, practice, process or service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
		No evidence of impact
Sexual orientation	RCVS Diversity and Inclusion Group Strategy - Professionals	Policy clearly states SRUC does not discriminate against protected characteristics. No evidence of impact
Religion or Belief		Policy clearly states SRUC does not discriminate against protected characteristics. If interviews conflicted with religious periods, alternative arrangements could be made for applicants. No evidence of impact
Pregnancy or maternity	Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk) RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals	Policy clearly states SRUC does not discriminate against protected characteristics. Ability to meet regulatory bodies core competencies is a key aspect of the BVSci. Whilst adjustments can be made to accommodate pregnancy, some areas it will be difficult to do so. It is stated in the Equality act that where professional bodies require certain professional competencies that are appropriate then adjustments may not be offered or possible. Not all applicants will declare Additional Support Needs at application stage although they will be encouraged to do so, there will be alternative points throughout the admissions process for applicants to disclose and discuss requirements.
Marriage or civil partnership		N/a – only relevant in employment. No evidence of impact

2.2 Consultation and stakeholder involvement: Speaking to people who will be affected by your policy, practice, process or service can help clarify the impact it will have on different equality groups. Describe below what you learned from the consultation/ involvement. Consultation can take time so make sure that you build this into your policy, practice, process or service review/ development timeline.

Various veterinary and medical institutions applying similar admission criteria (Charles Sturt, James Cook, TTU) – discussions demonstrated that by widening access to applicants from the desired remote and rural areas does lead to improved outcomes during mission focused programme and on to retention in these areas as graduates.
Rural and remote veterinary professionals have been keen to encourage widening participation and exposure during the programme to rural practice to improve retention of vet professionals

Scottish Government are keen to support Scotland's rural economy and see widening participation an important way to do this REACH Aberdeen described situations where rural and remote areas cannot deliver the teaching for applying to traditional vet schools. They have a lot of pupils interested in the veterinary profession who know they are unable to meet the requirements of other schools. Discussions with British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDs) describe the importance of role modelling people from diverse backgrounds in the profession so that students can 'see themselves' in these roles. The inclusion of a diverse interview panel will assist with role modelling from the application stage and will be continued throughout the course.

Individual discussions with students (both school age and mature) at various events and via SVM enquiries has described the variety of pathways that people have who want to enter the vet programme. These pathways are not always standard but demonstrate a range of skills not often looked for with traditional schools.

Work with Future Vets Scotland has demonstrated a real need for widening participation and involvement of local practitioners throughout the admissions process. Our change in focus from high tariff requirements to more holistic admissions was welcomed by Dr Karen Gardiner. This policy encourages inclusivity for all applicants and aims to widen accessibility. SVM seeks to support all applicants from application stage through to enrolment and success undertaking the BVSci programme. The School have widened their definitions for Contextual offers to include the levels 5-8 of the Scottish Urban Classification Index. This will improve access to applicants from additional remote and rural postcodes

2.3 Record here if you need to undertake a full equality impact assessment based on your evidence above.

Outcome of Step 2 following initial evidence gathering and relevance to equality characteristics	Yes/ No (Y or N)	Next steps
There is no relevance to equality		Proceed to sign off (step 5) to agree with decision makers that no EqIA is required based on current evidence
There is relevance to some or all of the equality groups	X	Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA
It is unclear if there is relevance to some or all of the equality groups		Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA

3 Impact on equality groups and changes to policy, practice, process or service

You must consider the three aims of the general duty for each protected characteristic. The following questions will help:

- **Is there potential for discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010?** How will this be mitigated?
- **Is there potential to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not?** How can this be achieved?
- **Is there potential for developing good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?** How can this be achieved?

3.1 Does the policy, practice, process or service have any impacts (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative) on any of the equality characteristics? In the tables below, record the impact of the policy, practice, process or service, as it is planned or as it operates, might have on each equality characteristic and describe what changes in policy, practice, process or service or actions will be required to mitigate that impact or to take advantage of a positive impact.

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
All protected characteristics	Potential for discrimination	X	X		There is potential for unconscious bias through the application process and interviews. We will mitigate this through interviewer training including SRUC unconscious bias course. Rubrics for marking submissions and interviews. 2-3

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
					interviewers on Panel (1x Practice partner, 1x SVM, 1x Admissions Team).
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			
	Potential to foster good relations			X	
Age	Potential for discrimination	X	X		Positive – presence of mature students within a cohort typically improves outcomes within whole cohort. SRUC will encourage mature students with alternative academic pathways and the admissions requirements have been set with this in mind. Will open career pathway to range of age groups who may have not thought a veterinary career possible. A section about mature students is explicitly included in the final policy.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Disability	Potential for discrimination		X		Negative – As stated on the website the aim would be to make all reasonable adjustments to enable a student with a disability to complete the course, however some disabilities may prevent applicants from being able to achieve the required competencies of this regulated programme. Positive – Where reasonable adjustments are possible this may also benefit the wider profession by providing a framework for how
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			
	Potential to foster good relations			X	

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
					practices can make reasonable adjustments for their employees.
Race	Potential for discrimination			X	Currently there are no plans to accept international applicants which could potentially discriminate. The programme will initially only be accredited by RCVS and so has limited scope to attract an international cohort.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity		X		
	Potential to foster good relations			X	
Sex	Potential for discrimination		X		Vet Schools have predominantly had a female bias in the UK, however this mirrors the applicant ratios in most cases. There may be some unconscious bias to increase male intakes however this is mitigated through safeguards in the application process as noted under 'all protected characteristics'.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	
	Potential to foster good relations			X	
Gender Reassignment	Potential for discrimination			X	Positive – suitable training for staff and careful production of materials can help to support people of all genders.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			
	Potential to foster good relations			X	
Sexual orientation	Potential for discrimination			X	Positive – with close ties to rural and remote communities the SVM may be able to improve acceptance and tolerance of different sexual orientations
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	
	Potential to foster good relations	X			

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
Religion or Belief	Potential for discrimination			X	Positive – with close ties to rural and remote communities the SVM may be able to improve acceptance and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Pregnancy or maternity	Potential for discrimination		X		As stated on the website the aim would be to make all reasonable adjustments to enable a student with a health concern to complete the course, however pregnancy may prevent applicants from being able to achieve the required competencies of this regulated programme Positive – Where reasonable adjustments are possible this may also benefit the wider profession by providing a framework for how practices can make reasonable adjustments for their pregnant employees.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			
	Potential to foster good relations			X	
Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)	Potential for discrimination			X	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	
	Potential to foster good relations			X	

3.2 Think about and describe below how your assessment impacts on your policy, practice, process or service review or development timeline including but not limited to:

- Procurement criteria: do you need to include specific equality criteria as part of the technical specification ?
- Communication plan/ products: do you need to communicate with people affected by this policy, practice, process or service in a specific format (e.g. audio, subtitled video, different languages)?
- Cost: do you propose any actions because of this assessment which will incur additional cost?
- Resources: do the actions you propose require additional or specialist resource to deliver them?

3.3 Record the outcome of this assessment below having considered the potential or actual impacts of your policy, practice, process or service on equality groups. Choose from one of the following (mark with an X or delete as appropriate):

Note: You must take action to remove barriers or take advantage of positive opportunities BEFORE the policy, practice, process or service goes live.

Please select (X)	Implications for the policy, practice, process or service
	No major change: Your assessment demonstrates that the policy, practice, process or service is robust. The evidence shows no potential for unlawful discrimination and that you have taken all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review.
	Adjust the policy, practice, process or service: You need to take steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality of to foster good relations. You have set actions to address this and have clear ways of monitoring the impact of the policy, practice, process or service when implemented.
X	Continue the policy, practice, process or service: The policy, practice, process or service will continue despite the potential for adverse impact. You have justified this with this assessment and shown how this decision is compatible with our obligations under the public sector equality duty. When you believe any discrimination can be objectively justified you must record in this assessment what this is and how the decision was reached.
	Stop and remove the policy, practice, process or service: The policy, practice, process or service will not be implemented due to adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated.

4 Monitoring the policy, practice, process or service impact and further actions

It is important to continue to monitor the impact of your policy, practice, process or service on equality groups to ensure that your actual or likely impacts are those you recorded. Your monitoring information will also inform a future review of the policy, practice, process or service.

4.1 Record in the table below how you intend to monitor the impact of this policy, practice, process or service on equality groups. In the table below you should:

- list the relevant measures,
- Identify who or which team is responsible for implementing or monitoring any changes
- Where the measure will be reported to (e.g. committee, ELT, Board) and how often.

Measure	Lead department/ individual	Reporting (where/ frequency)
Admissions metrics	Admissions/SVM	Annually to Admissions Committee
Conversion from offer to degree award	Admissions/SVM	Annually to Admissions Committee
Long term employment pathways	SVM	Surveys to graduates at 1, 2,5 and 10 years. Surveys to Employers Reported to SVM
Student feedback	SVM	Surveys to attendees following interviews Reported to SVM
Complaints/Appeals	SVM	Reported to Admissions Committee

4.2 Record further actions or changes required after the policy, practice, process or service is implemented in the table below. Make it clear if there are no outstanding actions.

Action	Lead department/ individual	Action target date
Agree detail around monitoring and who is responsible	Jim Anderson	End of 2023

5 Sign off and future review

Equality impact assessments must be signed off by the relevant Head of Service/ Department, even where an EqIA is not required. Also note here when you plan to review the policy, practice, process or service and accompanying EqIA which should be no later than 5 years from policy, practice, process or service implementation.

5.1 Senior Responsible Owner/ Committee sign off.

Job/ Committee title: SVM Admissions Committee
Date: 31/01/2024

5.2 Equality impact assessment review date.

Date: 01/07/2024

Important: You must send the final version of this equality impact assessment to:

- the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Lead.
- the Communications team for publication on SRUC’s equality page on the external website.



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Date policy, practice, process or service live from:	November 2023	
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