

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Policy, practice, process or service title:	VetExplore programme for boys in S3
Policy, practice, process or service lead/ owner:	Vivienne Mackinnon Christina Cameron
Others involved in EqlA assessment group	Assessment group included: Director of Partnerships Admissions Lead Marketing and Student Recruitment Officer School Manager
Policy, practice, process or service implementation date:	31/03/2026

1 Framing the policy, practice, process or service

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

Focus on the parts of the policy, practice, process or service where equality impacts are most likely.

VetExplore is a 3-day programme at SRUC's School of Veterinary Medicine and Biosciences campus in Aberdeen. In 2026 this will run from 31 March to 2 April and be open to all S3 boys in Scotland; there are up to 30 places available.



Why boys? There is a poor gender balance within veterinary degree programmes in the UK, with vet schools only having around 20% male students. Fewer boys are applying to vet school, and we want to change that.

VetExplore has three main objectives:

- Engage boys in a range of practical activities that inspire them about veterinary medicine
- Promote a range of career options within veterinary medicine
- Provide information on applying to study veterinary medicine and sources of support

The programme will also give boys the chance to see and interact with a range of male staff, students and visitors to increase awareness of male participation in veterinary medicine, and provide inspiring role models.

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

New

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

Boys in S3 considering a career in veterinary medicine.

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

None.

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).

You can add more rows to present the evidence if required.

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	Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 7: 2025 edition - gov.scot	School pupils tend to make subject choices for Highers in S4. Once Highers are chosen, it becomes much harder to change direction in order to obtain the entry requirements for veterinary medicine.
Disability	Towards a Fairer Future	Between 2018 and 2023 the proportion of applicants declaring a disability rose from one in ten to one in five.

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).
	Text version of demographics data on Veterinary surgeons - Professionals	<p>In 2019, 6.7% of vets had declared a disability.</p>
Race	Towards a Fairer Future Text version of demographics data on Veterinary surgeons - Professionals	<p>Between 2018 and 2023 the proportion of non-White applicants to veterinary medicine rose from 10% to around 15%.</p> <p>In 2019, 3.5% of vets were from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.</p>
Sex	Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 7: 2025 edition - gov.scot Towards a Fairer Future Text version of demographics data on Veterinary surgeons - Professionals https://phys.org/news/2025-06-men-veterinarians-male-flight.pdf	<p>The gender split of the veterinary medicine applicant pool consistently sits around four women to every one man across the period 2018-2023.</p> <p>In 2019, 42% of vets were male. By 2025, 39% of practising vets were male.</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).
Gender Reassignment	Towards a Fairer Future	Data on gender reassignment in veterinary medicine is very limited, but given the Supreme Court Ruling and resulting media coverage, it is likely that people with a trans history are facing discrimination and challenges in considering whether veterinary medicine would be welcoming as a career.
Sexual orientation		No impact
Religion or Belief		No impact
Pregnancy or maternity		No impact
Marriage or civil partnership		No impact
All characteristics	RCVS Standards and Guidance for the Accreditation of Veterinary Degree Programmes - Professionals	<p>The school must actively promote and maintain a culture that does not discriminate and enhances diversity, consistent with applicable law. (Standard 2.4)</p> <p>The school must demonstrate that the recruitment, selection and appointment of students, educators and staff are open, fair, transparent and free from bias. (Standard 3.6)</p> <p>The school must have a strategy for widening participation which considers all aspects of diversity and engages students from different ethnic and social backgrounds. The school must be proactive in their marketing to attract a diverse</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).
		cohort of applicants and regularly review, and provide evidence of, their progress towards targets. (Standard 4.2)

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.

Note who you consulted with, when you consulted with them, and what they told you about the impact of your proposed policy, practice, process or service.

In the planning for the programme, we have spoken to a range of stakeholders including vets, vet students, parents and teachers. There was general agreement that a programme to encourage boys to consider veterinary medicine would be a good addition to existing widening participation activities within the sector. While some concern was raised about discriminating against females, almost all feedback was positive.

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	Y	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	
Age	Potential for discrimination		x		This programme is targeted at a specific age range, justified on the basis that we believe this is a key age for course choices and considerations about future careers. If funding allows, other programmes may be created in the future targeting other age groups.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			x	
	Potential to foster good relations			x	
Disability	Potential for discrimination			x	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			x	
	Potential to foster good relations			x	
Race	Potential for discrimination			x	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			x	
	Potential to foster good relations			x	
Sex	Potential for discrimination			x	As described above, veterinary medicine applications are heavily dominated by females. It is hoped that this programme will advance equality of opportunity for boys looking to study veterinary medicine, and
	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	
					may foster good relations between male and female students.
Gender Reassignment	Potential for discrimination			x	While we are targeting the programme at boys, we would also welcome applications from people with a trans history, recognising that they are also underrepresented in veterinary medicine based on the available data.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	x			
	Potential to foster good relations	x			
Sexual orientation	Potential for discrimination			x	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			x	
	Potential to foster good relations			x	
Religion or Belief	Potential for discrimination			x	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			x	
	Potential to foster good relations			x	
Pregnancy or maternity	Potential for discrimination			x	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			x	
	Potential to foster good relations			x	
Marriage or civil partnership	Potential for discrimination			x	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			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	
(in employment only)	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?

There is no impact on the programme as the assessment shows mostly positive impacts. We may consider involving different age ranges in future programmes, but this is dependent on funding, and the current age range has been identified as the most likely to benefit from this programme.

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
X	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.
	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)
Characteristics of vet school applicants with a focus on sex and gender identity	Admissions/SVMB	2029 and annually thereafter

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

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: Caroline Argo

Date: 13/02/2026

5.2 Equality impact assessment review date.

Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

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.**



Document control		
Document control:	V0.1	
Date policy, practice, process or service live from:	[DATE]	
Review/ Approval Group:	[project board if relevant or delete]	
Last reviewed:	Date	
Review cycle:	[No more than three years]	
Document change log		
Version/ Author	Date	Comment
V0.1		