

Athena Swan renewal form for universities

Applicant information

Name of university	Royal Veterinary College
Date of current application	July 2022
Level of previous award	Bronze
Date of previous award	November 2017
Contact name	Nicola Menzies-Gow
Contact email	nmenziesgow@rvc.ac.uk
Contact telephone	01707 666333

Section	Words used
An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality	2600/2500 including 62 COVID-19 pandemic related words
An evaluation of the university's progress and issues	3097/3000 including 135 COVID-19 pandemic related words
Future action plan*	
Appendix 1: Culture survey data*	
Appendix 2: Data tables*	
Appendix 3: Glossary*	
Overall word count	5500 words + 197 extra for COVID-19 pandemic

*These sections and appendices should not contain any commentary contributing to the overall word limit

Overall word limit: 5500 words + 500 words for COVID-19 pandemic

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Section 1: An overview of the university and its approach to gender equality

In Section 1, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion A:

- *Structures and processes are in place to underpin and recognise gender equality work*

Recommended word count: 2500 words

1. Letter of endorsement from the head of the university

Office of the President & Principal

Royal Veterinary College
Hawkshead Lane
North Mymms
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL9 7TA

T +44 (0) 1707 666960

F +44 (0) 1707 666830

M +44 (0)7739 319428

E principal@rvc.ac.uk

W www.rvc.ac.uk

Advance HE
Napier House
24 High Holborn
London, WC1V 6AZ

29th July 2022

Dear Ms Baden

The preparation of this Athena Swan Bronze renewal application was undertaken during the last 15 months and is testament to the commitment and collegiality of my many colleagues, all of whom worked productively through the immediate post-pandemic period, adjusting to the 'new normal'. I acknowledge and thank the Self-Assessment Team (SAT) for their diligence and exceptional teamwork, and I was proud to be a SAT member. I can confirm that the information presented in our application, including the qualitative and quantitative data, is an honest and accurate representation of the institution, and I am pleased to endorse our submission.

We signed up to the transformed UK Athena Swan Charter and this submission uses the latest version of the 'new' Athena Swan template. We acknowledge that our previous action plan was over-ambitious, with 59 action plan points and very broad ambition. We have found the new approach helpful in shaping our self-assessment to understand better the key priorities for us as a small and specialised institution, and to develop a more focussed action plan that will have a measurable impact over the next 5 years.

For over a decade, the RVC community has endeavoured to enhance our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives and I have worked to ensure that these are embedded into the culture of the institution, not least through our strategic planning. This has culminated in leadership and management changes that will support and raise the profile of the SAT and its work, including the creation of the new role of Vice-Principal EDI, to which the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee was appointed following open competition. In addition, the part-time Diversity & Inclusion Manager has been promoted to a full-time Head of EDI role at a higher grade, and a further part-time operational position has been created. These roles have an institution-wide remit covering both staff and students and demonstrate the RVC's commitment to EDI and the resource it is prepared to invest in removing the barriers to delivering the previous action plan.

In addition to the commitment to structural changes, I am also proud of our achievements, including, but not limited to:

- Involvement in the Aurora Women's Leadership Programme and development of an alumni network and mentoring scheme
- Increased representation of women at grade 9 (from 30% to 40%)
- Gender balance on both College Executive Committee and Council
- Broadening of the E&D Policy to include policy and practice on transgender staff and students
- Review of the promotions processes to increase the visibility of personal circumstances for formal consideration

As to the future, we have identified four key priority areas for improvement:

- 1) Career and leadership development of both academic and PTO staff
- 2) Equality and diversity within the undergraduate and postgraduate student populations
- 3) Recruitment and retention, especially of research staff on fixed term contracts
- 4) Workplace culture, with particular respect to gender-related issues and workload allocation

I am committed to an active personal role, alongside the VP EDI and my senior team, in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into the RVC's long term strategy and seek to be a visible and vocal advocate for the cultural changes required . We are ambitious and excited about our activities, and we look toward a Silver Award Submission in 2027.

With grateful thanks for your consideration,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Reid', written in a cursive style.

Stuart WJ Reid
President

2. Description of the university and its context

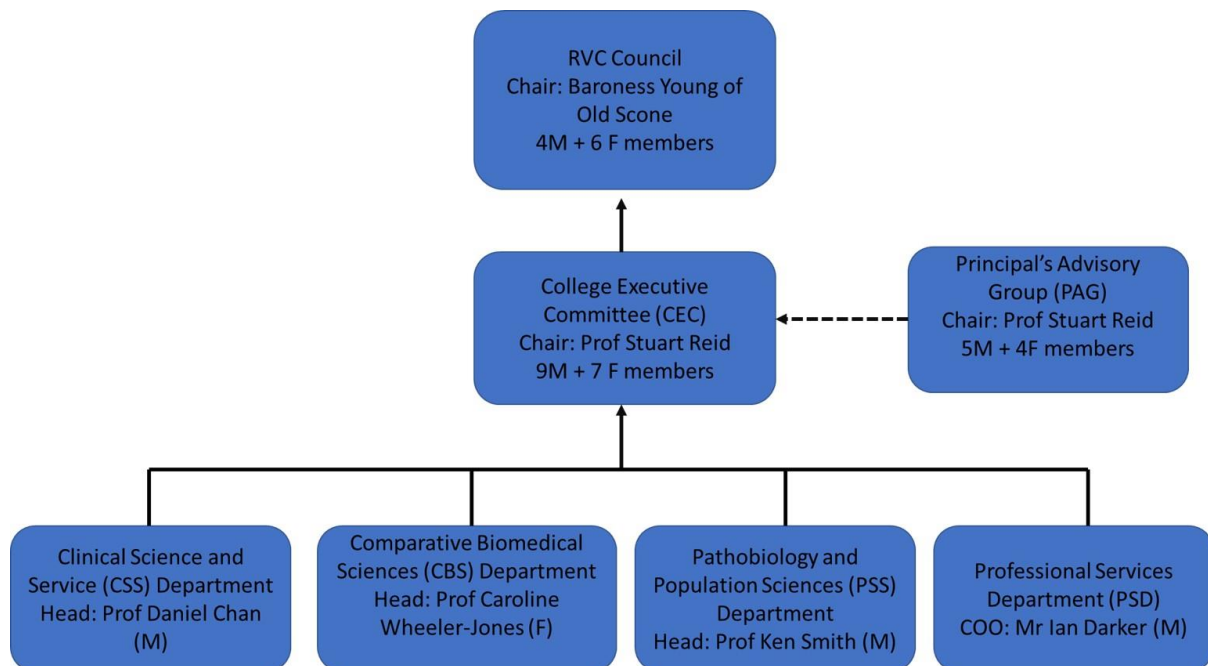
Founded in 1791, the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is a small and specialist institute whose mission is to be a leading international authority in education, clinical care, research, expert opinion and employment in veterinary and biomedical sciences.

RVC staff and students are spread across two campuses, Camden (North London) and Hawkshead (Hertfordshire). There are three academic departments, each undertaking integrated clinical, teaching and research activities (Figure 1):

- *Comparative Biomedical Sciences (CBS)* focuses on integrated teaching and research in various basic science disciplines including anatomy, biochemistry, molecular and cellular biology, pharmacology, genetics, and physiology.
- *Clinical Science and Service (CSS)* focuses on research, teaching and clinical care to deliver innovative veterinary medicine in the care of companion animals, be they large (RVC Equine in Hawkshead) or small (Queen Mother Hospital for Animals in Hawkshead and Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital in Camden).
- *Pathobiology and Population Sciences (PPS)* focuses on teaching and research in production animal medicine, animal welfare, epidemiology, veterinary public health, pathology, infectious disease, and immunology as well as providing diagnostic services for clinical colleagues within the RVC and further afield.

Most of the RVC's professional services functions sit within a fourth department, *Professional Services Department (PSD)*; however, others such Clinical Operations, Finance, Research and Innovation Office and RVC Business are small standalone departments. For the purposes of this application to ensure anonymity, all professional services will be considered as PSD.

Figure 1: Structure of the Royal Veterinary College



Due to the small size of the RVC, none of the departments hold departmental Athena Swan (AS) awards. Since the previous award in 2017, there have been no key contextual changes or developments in any of the departments.

Of the 1080 RVC staff members in July 2021, 29% were male and 71% were female (Figure 2A). There were proportionately more women compared to the sector average in Higher Education (HE; 54%, Figure 2B; Advance HE 2020). There were also more women than men in every staff category (Figure 3A). This was again higher than the HE sectors average (Advance HE 2020; Figure 3B).

Figure 2A: RVC Staff by gender 2021

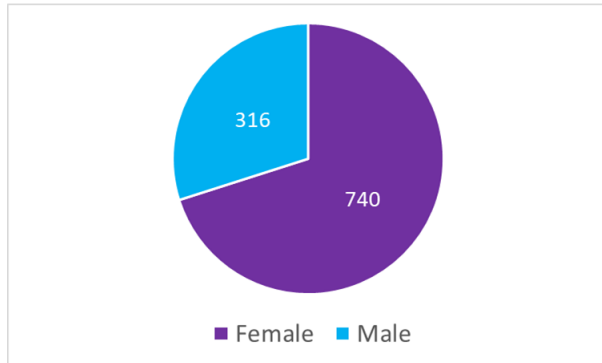


Figure 2B: UK HE Staff by gender 2021

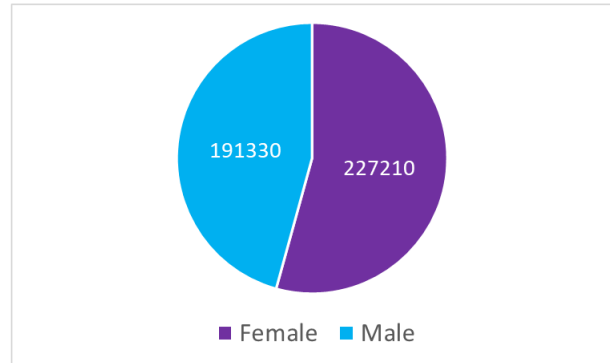


Figure 3A: RVC Staff roles by gender 2021

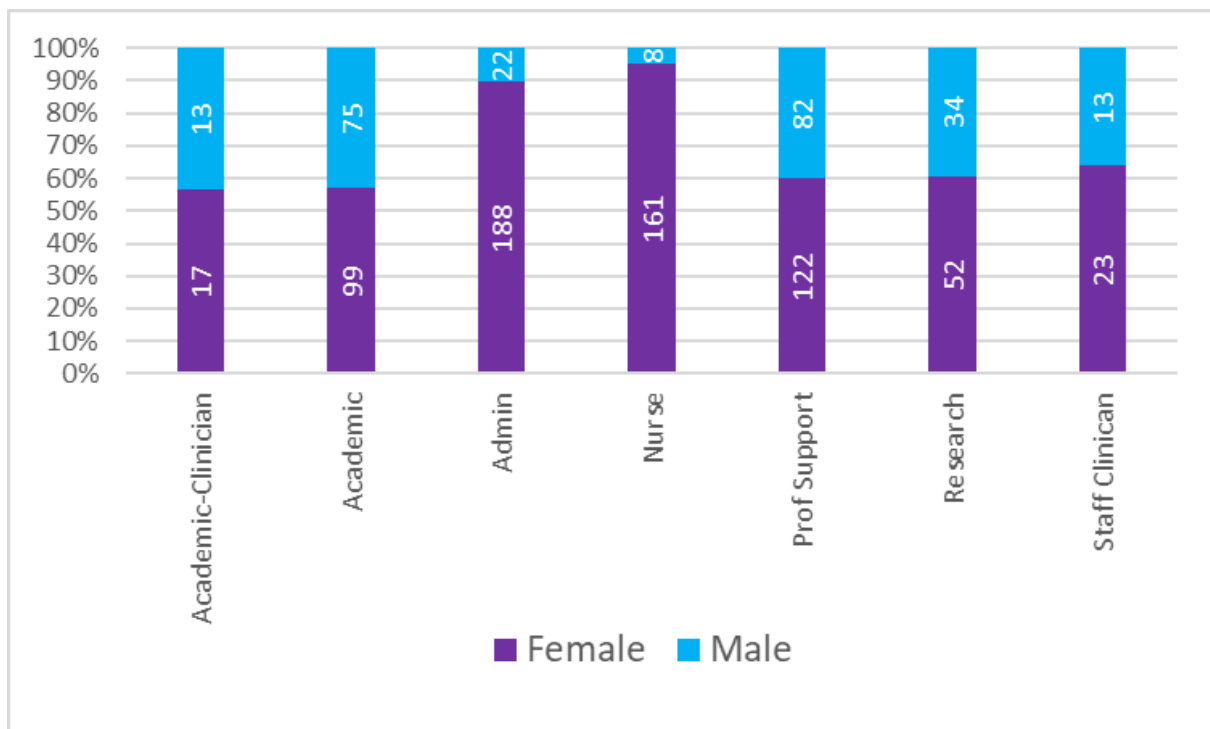
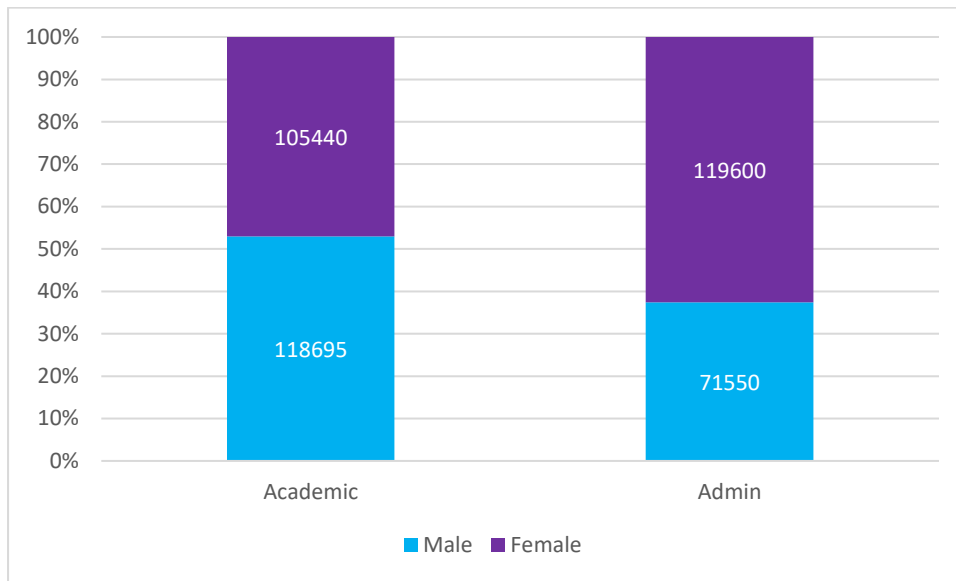
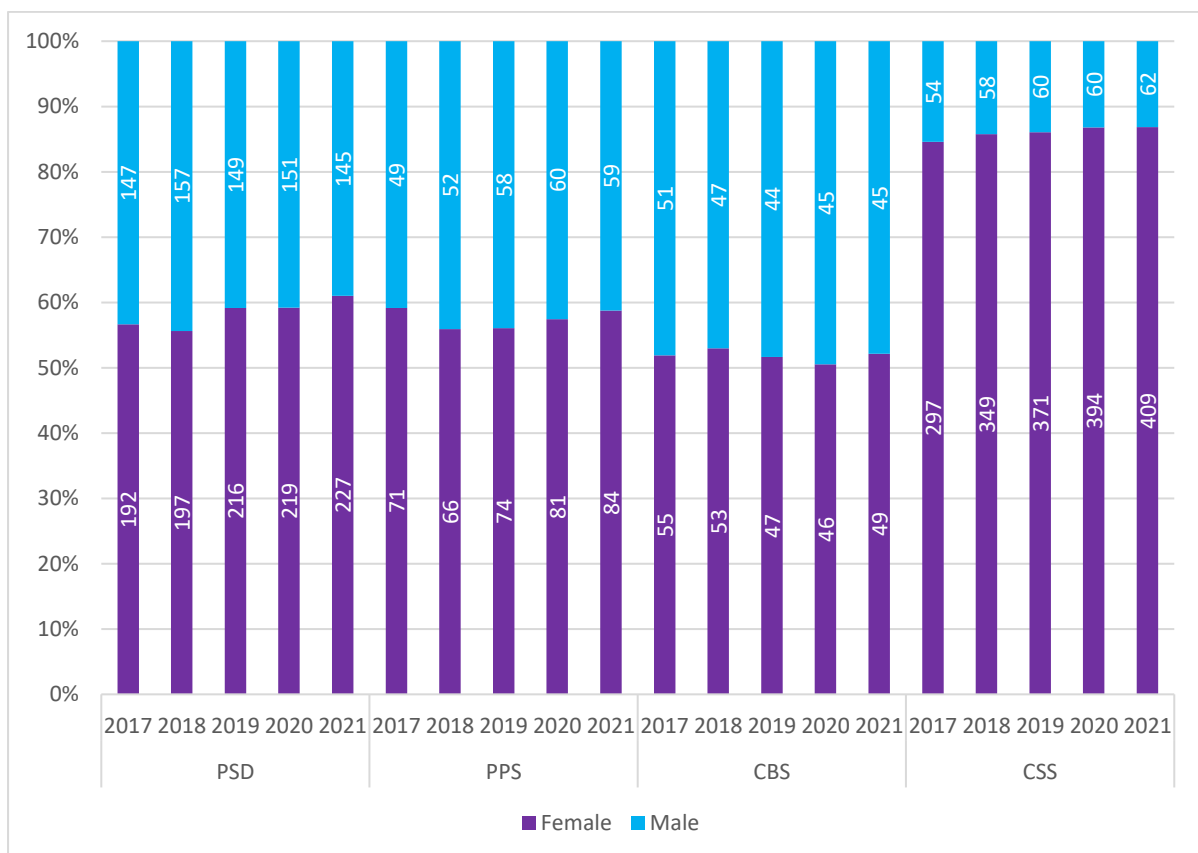


Figure 3B: HE Staff roles by gender 2021



Since the last award in 2017, the percentage of female staff has varied within each department (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The percentage of males and females in each department over the past 5 years



The RVC offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Nursing, Biological Sciences and Bioveterinary Sciences. The overall student

population (n=2740) in 2020/21 was 78% female and 22% male. These proportions have remained unchanged over the last three years (Table 1). The proportion of female students is higher than the HESA 2020/21 national average for all students in England (57%) but is very similar to the national averages for undergraduate (77.6%), research postgraduate (66.4%) and taught postgraduate (70.7%) students in veterinary science.

Table 1: The RVC student population

Students	Female	Male	Prefer not to say
2020/21	2145 (78.1%)	595 (21.7%)	5 (0.2%)
Undergraduate	1607 (82.0%)	349 (17.8%)	3 (0.2%)
Postgraduate Taught	462 (69.6%)	201 (30.3%)	1 (0.2%)
Postgraduate Research	76 (62.3%)	45 (36.9%)	1 (0.8%)
2019/20	2057 (78.5%)	556 (21.2%)	6 (0.2%)
Undergraduate	1581 (81.3%)	358 (18.4%)	5 (0.3%)
Postgraduate Taught	402 (72.0%)	156 (28.0%)	0 (0%)
Postgraduate Research	74 (63.3%)	42 (35.9%)	1 (0.9%)
2018/19	2054 (77.3%)	599 (22.5%)	4 (0.2%)
Undergraduate	1584 (80.2%)	388 (19.7%)	3 (0.2%)
Postgraduate Taught	395 (68.7%)	180 (31.3%)	0 (0%)
Postgraduate Research	75 (70.1%)	31 (29.0%)	1 (0.9%)

3. Athena Swan self-assessment process

1. A description of the self-assessment team (SAT)

Since the previous award in 2017, we have refreshed the SAT through appointment of two new co-chairs and the addition of new members to create a diverse membership that reflects the RVC community. SAT membership is voluntary and represents the broad mix of people at the RVC, across a range of grades with different work patterns, personal and professional commitments, and departments/specialisms. The current team has 28 members, 6 original and 22 new members (indicated with an *; Table 2); gender representation is 79% female and 21% male, which is representative of the RVC staff and student populations.

Table 2: Description of SAT Members

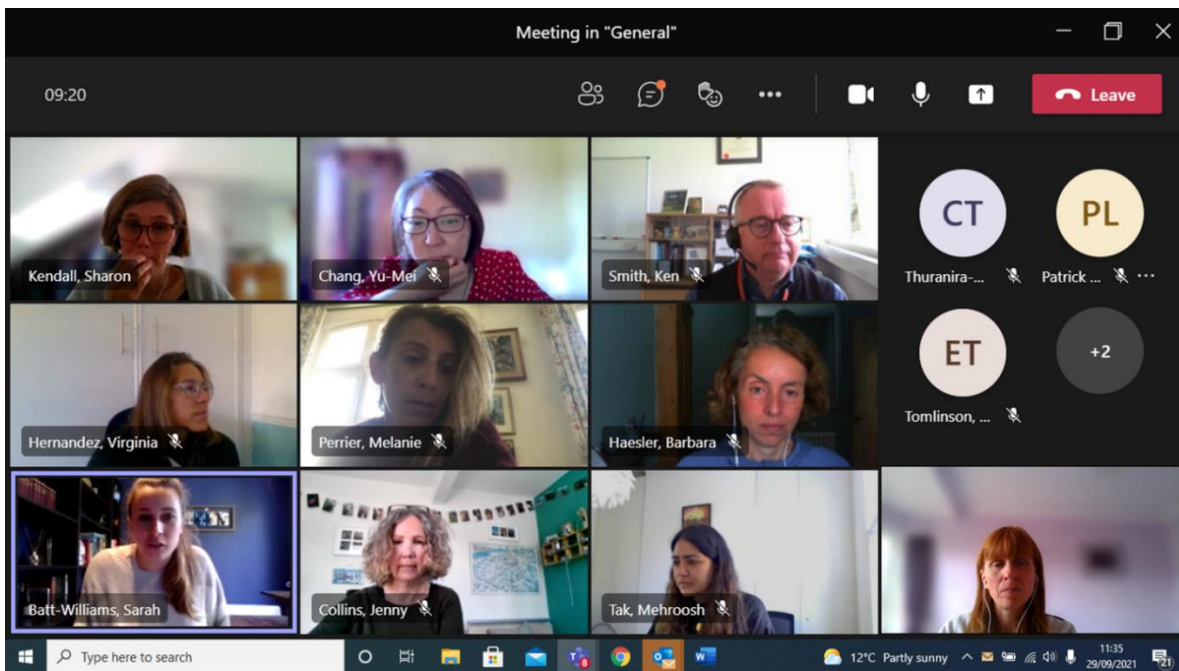
Member	Gender (M/F)	Job Title (Dept)	AC/PS/Student	Role in SAT
Sarah Batt-Williams*	F	Assistant Lecturer in Veterinary Nursing (CSS)	AC	Sub-group A and C
David Bolt*	M	Senior Lecturer in Equine Surgery (CSS)	AC	Sub-group E
Ruby Chang*	F	Senior Lecturer in Statistics (RSO)	AC	Sub-group B lead
Jenny Collins*	F	Trusts and Corporate Fundraising Officer (PSD)	PS	Sub-group E
Rebecca Costello	F	Deputy Director of Human Resources (PSD)	PS	Sub-group A
Srujana Damara	F	HR Information Systems Specialist (PSD)	PS	Sub-group B
Anna Frykfors*	F	Lecturer in small animal surgery (CSS)	AC	Sub-group D
Paula Goad*	F	CPD Manager (CSS)	PS	Sub-groups A and D
Debbie Guest*	F	Senior Research Fellow (CSS)	AC	Sub-group D
Barbara Haesler*	F	Senior Lecturer in Agrihealth (PPS)	AC	Sub-group B
Sharon Kendall*	F	Senior Lecturer in Molecular Bacteriology (PPS)	AC	Co-Chair; Sub-group D team lead
Virginia Marguan-Hernandez*	F	Senior Research Fellow in Veterinary Vaccinology (PPS)	AC	Sub-group D
Nicola Menzies-Gow*	F	Professor in Equine Medicine (CSS)	AC	Co-Chair; Sub-group E lead
Ferhat Nazir-Bhatti	F	Head of Diversity and Inclusion (PSD)	PS	Sub-group D

Patrick Lewis*	M	Professor of Neuroscience (CBS)	AC	Sub-group B
Grace MacKintosh-Sim	F	Outreach Development Manager (PSD)	PS	Sub-group A lead and sub-group C
Issy Maxwell*	F	Head of Human Resources Operations (PSD)	PS	Sub-groups A and D
Melanie Perrier*	FM	Lecturer in Equine Surgery (CSS)	AC	Sub-group C lead
Androniki Psifidi*	F	Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Clinical Genetics (CSS)	AC	Sub-groups A and E
Stuart Reid	M	Principal (OTP)	AC	
Ken Smith*	M	CEC member and Head of Department (PPS)	AC	Sub-group E
Les Soden*	M	Head of HR Information Systems, Pay & Reward (PSD)	PS	Sub-group B
Helen Stolp*	F	Lecturer in Pharmacology (CBS)	AC	Sub-group D
Ben Swift*	M	Research Fellow in Antimicrobial Resistance (PPS)	AC	Sub-group A
Mehroosh Tak*	F	Lecturer in Agribusiness (PPS)	AC	Sub-group B
Collette Taylor*	F	PhD student (PPS)	Student	Sub-group B
Christine Thuraniira-McKeever	F	Director of Distance Learning (PPS)	AC	Chair of the Equality & Diversity Committee (EDC)
Emma Tomlinson*	F	Head of Research Development (RSO)	PS	Sub-group D

2. An account of the self-assessment process

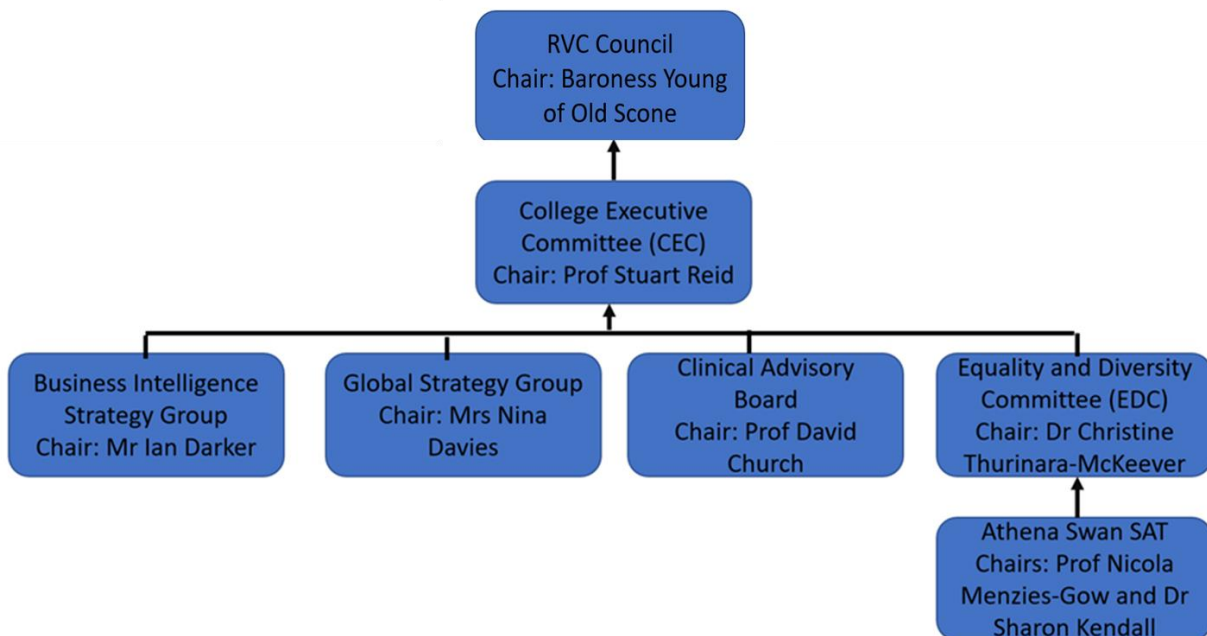
The SAT met monthly during core working hours to accommodate the working patterns of all staff, thus encouraging good attendance. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings were held virtually using Microsoft Teams (Figure 5) to which all SAT members have access. More recently, meetings involving smaller groups of SAT members have been held in person during core working hours.

Figure 5: SAT meeting held virtually using Microsoft Teams



The committee reports to the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC; Figure 6) which meets termly.

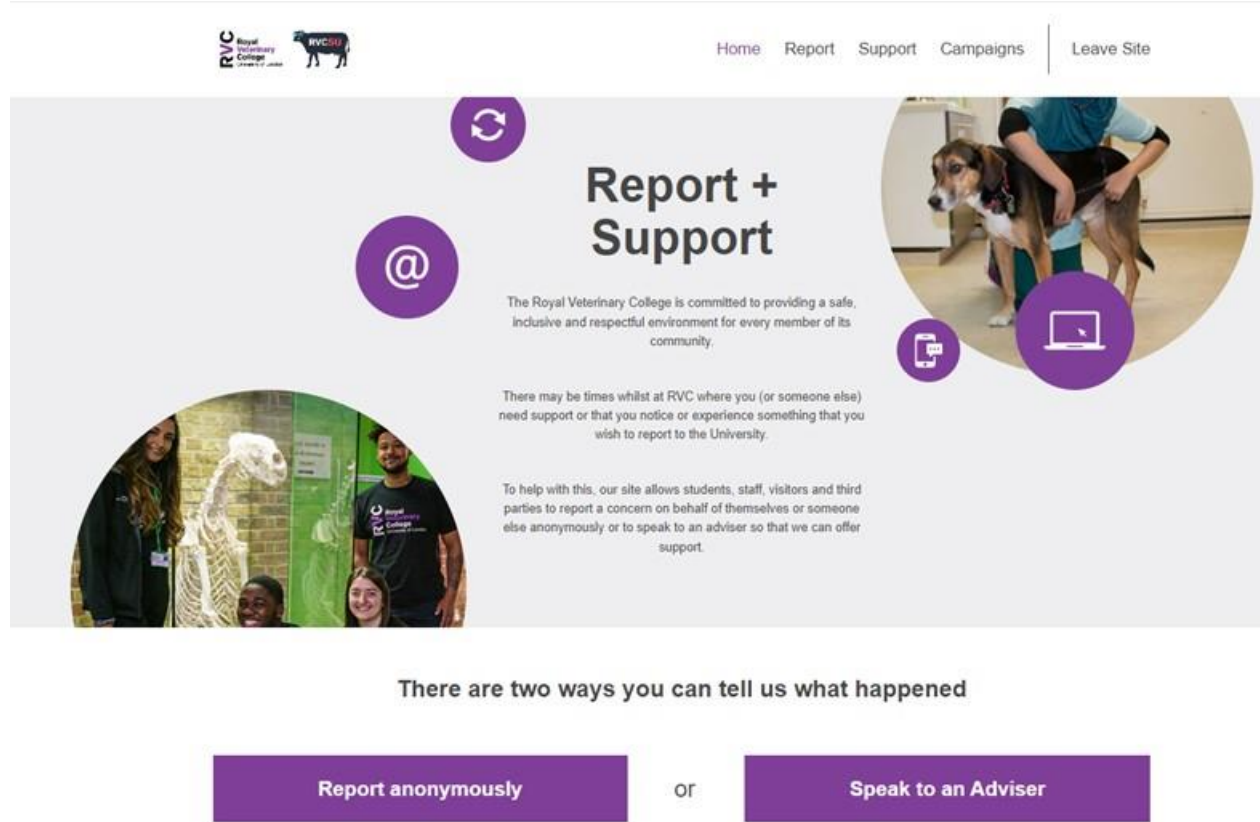
Figure 6: Reporting structure



Staff are encouraged to raise equality and diversity (E&D) issues with their departmental E&D champions and/or Dignity at Work and Study ambassadors who are listed on the RVC intranet, or via the 'Report and Support' portal (Figure 7). Students have three avenues to raise E&D concerns. The first route is via the Students Union (SU) E&D officer who is also a member of and can raise any student issues at the EDC. The SU E&D and Welfare officers

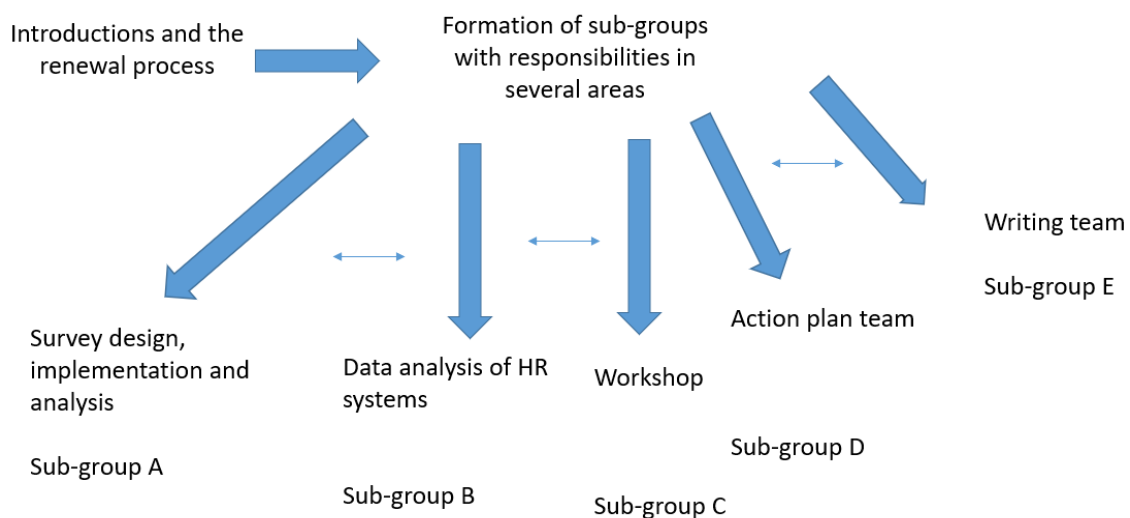
are both E&D champions with the same role as that of other E&D champions, but for students. Second, students can raise E&D issues via the Advice Centre, whose Head is also a member of the EDC. Third, students can report issues via the 'Report and Support' portal.

Figure 7: RVC Report and Support portal



The first goal of the SAT when considering submission of a Bronze renewal application was to create subgroups with specific areas of responsibility (Figure 8).

Figure 8: The structure of the SAT subgroups



Key priorities for the SAT were:

- Establishment of SAT sub-groups
- Familiarisation with resources (all sub-groups)
- Mentor/advisor consultation
- Engagement with the College Executive Committee (CEC)
- Survey – design, carry out and analyse institution-wide staff and student surveys (sub-group A)
- Data acquisition and analysis from human resources (HR) systems (sub-group B)
- Undertake staff and student focus groups/workshop to explore survey themes (sub-group C)
- Review of progress on the previous action plan (PAP) and formulation of a new action plan (NAP; sub-group D)
- Writing of the renewal application (sub-group E)

Undertaking comprehensive staff and student surveys was identified as a key priority. The surveys were designed by subgroup A in consultation with the SU for the student survey and launched to staff and students in September and October 2021, respectively. Both surveys were open for 6 weeks and various forms of communication and the opportunity to win prizes used to encourage participation. There were 768 staff survey responses (77.4%), of which 68.7% were female, 27% were male and 4.3% preferred not to say; this is reflective of the gender distribution of the staff population (71% female, 29% male). In total, 25.7% of students completed the student survey, of which 82.7% were female, 14.2% were male and 3.1% preferred not to say or identified as non-binary; this is reflective of the student population gender distribution (78.1% female, 21.7% male and 0.2% prefer not to say).

Staff focus groups were held virtually using Zoom break out rooms in December 2021 to facilitate discussion on the most important themes identified from the surveys, namely belonging and inclusion, gender equality, work-life balance, bullying and harassment, career development and wellbeing. Forty-five people attended, of which 20 (44%) were male and 25 (56%) female. Student focus groups were planned, but no one attended. There was good engagement with Padlet boards that enabled staff and students to anonymously post thoughts and comments on these themes in November 2021. Additionally, a face-to-face discussion forum was held with members of PSD as these staff have least access to a computer at work and this department was least represented in the staff survey.

Data from HR systems was also identified as critical for an up-to-date description of the institution and to evaluate PAP impacts. Sub-group B analysed recruitment, training, gender pay gap, staff and academic staff promotion data, comparing these to national HE benchmarks.

Once the data had been analysed, sub-group D re-evaluated progress on the PAP using the living document that had been continually reviewed by the diversity and inclusion (D&I) Manager over the award period. The PAP was RAG rated and explanations for each rating provided. Additionally, the quantitative and qualitative data was used to identify the key priorities and draft the NAP. Comments on the draft NAP were received from EDC and CEC and the final version was approved by CEC.

Finally, Sub-group E divided the task of writing the various parts of the renewal application, receiving regular input from the SAT, EDC and final approval from CEC.

3. Reflection on panel feedback provided on previous application

Many features of our previous application were commended by the assessment panel, but there were also points for consideration:

- **Consider including specific examples of current key challenges and priorities in the letter of endorsement**
Examples have been included.
- **Consider providing a gender breakdown of students in the description of the institution**
This has been included.
- **Consider the inclusion of a veterinary nurse on the SAT, more specific details on how the SAT will continue, a gender breakdown of staff survey response rate and a diagram of the reporting structure would be helpful.**
These have been included.
- **Actions to address usefulness of induction, along with providing take-up details of those completing induction.**
Changes to the induction process were not included in the PAP as 68% of staff surveyed indicated HR induction materials were useful and relevant, and 65% indicated the departmental induction was useful and relevant. Induction was similarly not highlighted as a key priority area in the 2021 staff survey.
- **More reflection on why there is an underrepresentation of men to ensure that there is a clear rationale for the actions.**
This referred to the under-representation of men particularly in administration and nursing positions. RVC Veterinary nurses (VNs) are currently 95% female, 5% male; the 2019 Veterinary Nurse Profession survey revealed that 2.7% of UK's VNs are male. Current RVC administrative and professional support staff are 75% female, 25% male, compared to 68% female, 37% male in the wider HE sector. Attracting more men into these roles is likely to require several approaches but finding male role models within the RVC community who have been successful in those career paths is likely to play an important part (NAP 1.10).
- **More consideration of how career breaks are considered in promotions.**
Career breaks are now considered in the academic promotions process through suspending and resuming the individual career pathway (ICP) to promotion. Communication plans on the academic promotion process is highlighted as a key priority in the NAP (1.2).
- **Further reflection on why a high proportion of people do not wish to declare their gender in the survey.**
In the 2021 surveys, 4.3% of staff and 3.1% of students did not declare their gender. This figure for staff is likely to be due to concerns relating to anonymity in a small institution.

- **Further reflection on the decrease in the percentage of completed appraisals between 2013 and 2016.**

The institutional culture on the importance of annual appraisals has changed and the negative trend observed 2013-2016 regarding completion has been reversed such that completion rates for 2017-2021 ranged 67-73%. This continues to be a priority in the NAP (1.1).

- **Mandatory training about managing flexible working.**

In the 2021 staff survey, 62% of females and 79% of males were aware of the RVC flexible working policy; 65% of females and 79% of males agreed their department enabled flexible working; 63% of females and 64% of males agreed their manager would be open to discussion about flexible working arrangements; and 80% of females and 88% of males agreed their manager handled their request with competence and knowledge. Although training has been introduced and provided regularly, only 25% of female and 42% of male managers felt they had enough support and information relating to flexible working arrangements. This disparity will be addressed further in the NAP (4.5).

- **Consider if stronger action may be needed to address workload transparency.**

Introduction of a workload allocation model (WAM) was delayed by COVID-19 and is being introduced for academics in late 2022 (NAP 4.3).

- **Additional measurable targets are needed throughout the action plan. Success measures should focus on the change that the actions are aiming to achieve and go beyond just the completion of the action.**

Our NAP has SMART success measures and targets embedded throughout.

4. Plans for the future of the self-assessment team

The SAT will continue to meet termly to oversee implementation of the NAP. To refresh the committee, the co-chairs will serve for a maximum of 3 years and other committee members will serve for a maximum of 5 years. Deputies will be appointed soon after co-chair succession to ensure a smooth transition. Periodic open invitations will be sent to all staff members when there are vacancies. Each point on the NAP will have a SAT member assigned to take responsibility for monitoring and reporting back to the committee. We will RAG rate the NAP on an annual basis to continually monitor progress, identify barriers and ensure changes can be made to increase the chance of each point having a real, positive impact. We will continue to ensure that AS and other areas of E&D are high on the agenda of each Department and the RVC as a whole; this is facilitated by the EDC Chair being a member of CEC following appointment to Vice Principal for EDI, a new position for 2022, and the 0.6FTE role of the D&I Manager being expanded to a full-time Head of EDI.

Section 2: An evaluation of the university's progress and issues

1. Evaluating progress against the previous action plan

Consideration of the previous action plan

The methods used to monitor and evaluate the progress on actions, the main barriers and facilitators, new initiatives introduced, and the main learnings are outlined below (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Overview of methods used for monitoring and evaluation, barriers faced, facilitators, new initiatives, and main learnings from the previous action plan



Overall, the SAT feel good progress has been made on the PAP with 25/59 (42%) action points (APs) rated green, 26 (44%) amber and 8 (14%) red. Those APs rated as amber or red are reflected on below:

Theme 1 of the PAP was to embed AS Charter Principles into RVC Culture. **AP1.1-1.3** were implemented to endorse and support E&D through public adventures. Whilst a statement on the AS charter is on the intranet and internet, it is not yet included on all recruitment material (**AP1.1**). Additionally, only 67% of staff and 18% of students surveyed indicated awareness of AS prior to survey completion. Although attendance at CEC has increased (there have been 10-12 observers; **AP1.2**), only 37% of staff surveyed agreed CEC was open and transparent. Town-Hall meetings occur termly (**AP1.3**), but only 40% of staff surveyed agreed they were inclusive and informative for updates on AS. Thus, improving communication of work relating to AS is a high priority in the NAP (**4.7**).

AP1.4-1.6 were implemented to identify role models and create an inclusive community. Progress has been made on inclusion of AS in key RVC communications (AP1.4), such as celebration of role models on the intranet as part of marking national events such as Black History Month (Figure 10) and International Women’s Day with additional individual achievements noted on the intranet Message of the Day (Figure 11). However, only 55.3% of staff surveyed agreed they could find a suitable role model.

Figure 10: Celebrating Black History Month

RVC Royal Veterinary College University of London

Home Search Site Map **Intranet**

News & Classified Ads | Teaching & Assessment | Staff & Departments | Information & Services

Equality and Diversity

Equality and Diversity
[E&D Home Page](#)
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[E&D News](#)

Athena SWAN
[Athena SWAN Charter](#)
[Bronze Award](#)
[Athena SWAN News](#)

Race Equality
[Race Equality Charter](#)

Equality and Diversity News

Black History Month 28 Oct 2020

Celebrating Black History Month

David Maruta
Chief Information Officer and chair of the IT Operations and Management Group

In my role, I am responsible for defining the IT strategy, and overseeing the operational activities to ensure that IT services are efficient, effective and tailored towards the evolving requirements of the College. I am responsible for the security of our computer systems and information assets.

I took my Bachelor’s degree at the University of Hertfordshire and pursued a career in software engineering in the private sector before moving to the NHS, and then to the RVC in 2009. I have since gained a Master’s degree and progressed into my current role as the College’s CIO.

What does Black History Month mean to me

It is a time to shine a light on our shared British history and tell the whole story honestly and truthfully, to decolonise and reclaim history, and tell stories from the perspective of all people.

Read more at <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/study/rvc-is-open-for-all/black-history-month-2020-staff-role-models>

[Return to the Equality and Diversity News page](#)
[Return to the Athena SWAN News page](#)

Information and Services | Equality and Diversity

Figure 11: Inspirational Women at the RVC

The screenshot shows the RVC Intranet page for Equality and Diversity. The RVC logo (Royal Veterinary College, University of London) is in the top left. Navigation icons for Home, Search, and Site Map are in the top right. A purple navigation bar contains links for News & Classified Ads, Teaching & Assessment, Staff & Departments, and Information & Services. The main content area is titled 'Equality and Diversity News' and features a news item by Prof Joanne Webster dated 19 Mar 2019. The news item text states: 'We are delighted to announce that Joanne Webster (Professor of Parasitic Diseases), has been included in the list of Five Inspirational Women shaping the future of International Development that has been put together by the London International Development Centre (LIDC). In their blog, LIDC shine a light on women's achievements in a range of domains and industries. They wanted to showcase five outstanding women from LIDC member institutions who have made a major impact in international development, including Joanne.' A sidebar on the left lists links for Equality and Diversity, Athena SWAN, and Race Equality. At the bottom, there are links to return to the Equality and Diversity News page and the Athena SWAN News page. The footer contains the text 'Information and Services | Equality and Diversity'.

Inaugural lectures were initially held (AP1.6) for newly promoted professors, however this was suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Promoting the careers of PS staff is a focus in the NAP (1.10)

AP1.7-1.11 were implemented to encourage diverse committee representation and balance workload impact. Female staff represent 60%, 44% and 44% of members on Council, CEC and principal's advisory group (PAG), respectively. However, only 50% of staff surveyed felt committee membership was an open and transparent process, and not all committees have a fixed term basis with a transparent process for membership yet (AP1.9). Committee turnover is a challenge for a small specialist institute, and we have two new actions to improve transparency and maintain the membership diversity (NAP 1.5 and 1.6). The gender profile of academic leadership positions is a focus in the NAP (1.3, 1.4). The action to monitor committee workload impact was not undertaken as the workload allocation model (WAM) was not launched due to COVID-19 pandemic (AP1.10); this is a focus in the NAP (4.3).

Theme 2 concentrated on strengthening E&D training by adding tools to tackle and address unconscious bias. AP2.1-2.5 were implemented to ensure E&D training is completed by all staff, particularly managers; completion rates were 86% in 2018 and 73% in 2020/1 (AP2.2), but there is scope for further improvement. The E&D training undertaken by all staff biennially has been amended to focus more on unconscious bias, particularly gender bias (AP2.4), but further work is required as only 63.2% of staff surveyed felt comfortable in addressing unconscious bias.

Theme 3 focussed on developing and enhancing the RVC E&D policy and support framework. AP3.1-3.4 were implemented to update policy to reflect RVC diversity and include guidance on transgender staff and students and other under-represented groups. The policy has been reviewed and now includes promotion of inclusive practice for transgender staff and students (AP3.1). Both the EDC and LGBT+ network celebrate LGBT+ month each year (Figure 12). Despite this, only 56.2% of staff and 24% of students surveyed were aware of

the RVC transgender policy, whilst 76% of staff and 78% of students felt empowered to support peers to tackle discrimination. Improving communication is a focus in the NAP (4.7).

Figure 12: Examples of celebration of LGBT+ on the RVC Intranet

Equality and Diversity News

Transgender Policy and Pride Month

30 Jun 2021

June is the month chosen to celebrate **pride** as it was the month of the **Stonewall riots**, the protests that changed gay rights for a lot of people in America and beyond. It's about people coming together in love and friendship, to show how far gay rights have come, even if in some places there's still some work to be done. Pride month is about teaching tolerance, education in pride history and continuing to move forward in equality. It calls for people to remember how damaging homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and bigotry in general was and still is. It's all about being proud of who you are - and valued for who you are - no matter who you love or how you identify.

The RVC is working towards building a culture where everyone can flourish, and members from the LGBT+ community can work and study in an inclusive environment without the fear of being treated less favourably.

In recognition of raising awareness of our continued commitment to the LGBT+ community, a Transgender Policy has been produced in consultation with the RVC staff and student community. Details of the policy can be found: <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/Media/Default/About/Human%20Resources/Documents/Transgender-Policy.pdf>

LGBT+ History Month

Posted 01 Feb 2022

LGBT+ History Month is marked in the UK annually in February. As well as celebrating the achievements and diversity of the LGBT+ community, the month focuses on raising awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, and related civil rights movements. The overall aims of the month are to promote equality and diversity for the benefit of the public. At RVC, we are committed to having an environment in which inclusivity underpins all that we do.

In the UK, LGBT+ History Month has been an annual event since 2005. Every year there is a theme and a well-publicised launch event at a high-profile location to try and get the message out to as many as possible. Since 2011, LGBT+ History Month has been linked to a different school subject each year — in 2022 the theme 'Politics In Art' links with Art and Design. There are a number of activities planned nationwide for this month.

You'll see the Pride flags being raised again on both campuses for the month of February, and there will be a number of events throughout the month. The student LGBT+ Society are hoping to invite an external speaker, and Andy will be working on another visual display involving staff and students (keep your eyes peeled for the notice and email). Remember, for LGBT+ students, we have the LGBT+ society, and for staff, we have the LGBT+ Staff and Allies Network (the simplest way to join the staff network is to send Andy an email on asmars@rvc.ac.uk).

Best wishes

The Equality & Diversity Committee (EDC)

Christine Thuranira-McKeever, Chair, Equality and Diversity Committee
cthuraniramckeever@rvc.ac.uk

February 2019: Students and staff of the RVC marked the end of LGBT History Month 2019, with two rainbow events to celebrate diversity and raise awareness of the new LGBT+ Staff & Allies Network. The installations involved sixty-four metres of fabric, eight metres of each of the eight colours of the People of Colour-inclusive rainbow flag. The fabric was interspersed with staff and students who formed part of the display.



Feb 2021: This collection of photos was then used to form the LGBTQ+ flag. Organised by RVC Chaplain, the Revd. Andy Marshall, this involved nearly 100 staff and students coming together to make a visible statement of inclusion and support for the LGBT+ community.



AP3.5-3.6 were implemented to ensure alignment between policy and practice. Guidance on how to perform an equality impact assessment was launched in 2018 and staff responsible for policy development and service delivery offered training. Insufficient time has elapsed to allow data to be gathered to identify the steps needed to bring policy and practice together and implement change (AP3.6). However, some of the outputs of the EIAs have been used to inform the NAP (1.7 and 1.8).

The fourth theme was to develop a culture that supports and encourages flexible working. Overall, 67% of staff surveyed were aware of the RVC flexible working policy and flexible working options. Whilst the RVC flexible working guide is published on the intranet, a dedicated 'Flexible Working' section has yet to be created (AP4.4).

The fifth theme was to provide a commitment to improving career progression. AP5.1-5.4 were implemented to ensure the appraisal process maintains a focus on career progression and development. Guidance on inclusion of career development discussions in appraisals was produced and shared (AP5.1); 70% of staff surveyed reported discussing this in appraisals; however, 20% of these discussions were deemed ineffective. There is oversight of appraisal completion rates by CEC (AP5.3); however, completion rates are still below the

95% target; this is a focus in the NAP (1.1). A project exploring succession planning within the RVC, with particular focus on establishment of deputy leadership positions, is ongoing but data on its success is unavailable to date (AP5.4); this is a focus in the NAP (1.3-1.6).

AP5.5-5.8 were implemented to ensure training supports career progression and is valued. The types of professional development opportunities valued by each cohort of staff to map to institutional support and expenditure have not been reviewed (AP5.7), and the launch of the WAM was delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic (AP5.8, 6.9); the latter is a focus in the NAP (4.3).

AP5.9-5.10 were implemented to improve awareness and support of the promotions process. Annual workshops were held prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (AP5.9) and this will be re-established; this is a focus in the NAP (1.2). The RVC has developed a team of mentors and coaches, in addition to role models, to support staff development (AP5.10).

The sixth theme was to support and develop female leaders. AP6.1-6.2 were implemented to understand why staff feel unsupported within their leadership responsibilities. Investment in the Aurora Leadership Programme and establishment of a working group to deliver improvements in this area have resulted in identification of females with leadership potential and establishment of an environment to facilitate their development (AP6.3). Role models are promoted via the intranet and celebrated as part of International Women's Day (AP6.4). However, only 55% of staff surveyed agreed they can find RVC role models and only half were aware of how many female RVC leaders there were and whether this had improved over time. This is a focus in the NAP (1.3-1.6, 1.10, 1.12).

AP6.5-6.8 were implemented to create a culture of mentorship and support. Mentorship and coaching is part of an management development program (MDP) module (AP6.6), but as the WAM launch was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic (AP6.9), mentoring is not an accountable activity. Automatic mentor allocation to new staff (AP6.7) was not implemented as it was considered not fit for purpose. Instead, there is a formal mentoring scheme for contract researchers and for Aurora, which includes training and sharing of practice for mentors open to those on the scheme and those mentoring informally or through other systems. There is also a new mentoring program for those seeking advice outside academic progression. A buddy system for staff planning extended leave is being developed (AP6.8) and is a focus in the NAP (4.6).

The seventh theme was support for staff with caring responsibilities. Meaningful data have yet to be collected to identify reasons for non-return after leave e.g., maternity leave (AP7.1); this is a focus in the NAP (3.1). AP 7.3 aimed to keep childcare provision on the agenda for future capital works. This remains on the agenda; however, only 20% of staff and 24% of students surveyed agreed they would use it. AP 7.4 aimed to gauge interest in the introduction of a carers' network. This network was not maintained after its initial creation through lack of resources; however, 85% of staff surveyed felt supported prior to parental leave and after returning to work.

Theme 8 contained additional actions. AP8.1 aimed to collect more meaningful data on exit interview. The exit interview form was revised, and capture of EDI issues implemented, but it is too soon for meaningful data analysis; this is a focus in the NAP (3.1). Renumeration for Grade 9 academic staff was modernised by the introduction of a spine point scale (AP8.2); however only 26% of staff surveyed perceive fair pay distribution across genders. Data collection is ongoing to determine why women are not progressing to senior roles (AP8.3). The RVC updated the dignity at work and study policy and launched harassment and bullying ambassadors who provide support and information (AP8.5). Overall, 68% of staff but only

18% of students surveyed were aware of the policy, whilst 72% of staff and 69% of students felt the RVC would take any complaint of harassment seriously. This is a focus in the NAP (2.2).

RAG rated previous action plan

Number	Rationale	Actions- and how	Target timing	Responsible	Success criteria/outcomes
1. Embed Athena SWAN Charter Principles into RVC culture					
1.1	Endorse and support equality and diversity through public adventures	Include statement on commitment to AS charter principles on RVC intranet and internet and recruitment material	June 17	Director of Marketing, E&D manager	Commitment to AS charter principles is visible internally and externally
1.2		Increased attendance and presentations from staff across the RVC at the CEC	Dec 17 March '18 then quarterly	Principal, Secretary to CEC	Data shows increase in attendance. AS2020 survey indicates staff perceives CEC as open and transparent
1.3		Host bi-annual 'Town Hall' meetings for CEC to discuss progress relating to Athena SWAN actions	June '17 and Nov '17, then twice yearly as appropriate	Principal, Secretary to CEC	AS2020 survey indicates staff perceives forums as valuable, inclusive, and informative
1.4	Identifying role models and creating and inclusive community	Inclusion of AS in key RVC communications (e.g., community newsletter) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current E&D and AS issues and activities • Minutes and highlights of EDC meetings • Celebrating role models across the spectrum of staff 	Aug '18 and quarterly thereafter	Director of Marketing, Chair of EDC, E&D Manager	Appropriately resourced, and timely communications that cover these key areas

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key highlights of annual equal opportunities monitoring data 			
1.5		Celebrate success such as promotions, grants, papers, clinical advancements, and teaching awards	Aug'17	HoDs, VPs	AS2020 survey indicates improved perception of role models for all and that this activity is supportive and inclusive
1.6		Host inaugural lectures and other activities promoting role models	Aug'17	HoDs, VPs	
1.7	Encourage diverse committee representation and balance workload impact	Review barriers to participation and make changes to committee constitutions to ensure gender balance and better representation where that is an appropriate solution		College Secretary, COO and Principal	Actions complete and impact monitored with the aim of no less than 40% of any gender on any committee
1.8		Report representation on committees, including information on gender, grade, FTE, disability, and ethnicity data to CEC annually		Committee Chairs and Secretaries	
1.9		Ensure that all 'representative' committee roles operate on a fixed term basis, supported by timely monitoring and flagging of expiration of terms and a transparent published process for nominations		Head of Governance planning and compliance, COO and Principal	

1.10		Monitor accurate attendance at committees to subsequently identify next steps needed to address committee workload impact on individuals		Head of Governance planning and compliance and WMG	
1.11		Embed E&D as an agenda item into all committee business, including Academic Board and other key committees.		Head of Governance planning and compliance	
2. Strengthen E&D training by adding tools to tackle and address unconscious bias					
2.1	Ensure E&D training is completed by all new and existing staff, particularly staff managers	Appraisal and Probation processes to include a requirement to check E&D training is completed.	Jan '18 and then annually	Deputy Director of HR & Head of HR Operations	Processes amended and adhered to. Progress reported annually to CEC.
2.2		Ensure access to and promote positive benefits of undertaking this training through targeted communication to all staff. Report levels of completion to CEC during the three-month period in which staff are told to complete the training, for their follow up with staff directly.	Feb '18	SDM EDC Chair & E&D Manager	Training completion rates >85% by Dec '18, 100% by Dec '19 Reports included in CEC meeting agendas. A decrease in formal/informal complaints, measured via annual monitoring and staff engagement survey.
2.3		Include unconscious bias training in all MDP programme courses that relate to decision making.	July '18	SDM E&D Manager	Unconscious bias training is incorporated into all decision-making training within MDP.
2.4		Review E&D training to	Nov '17	SDM	Unconscious bias training

		increase focus on Unconscious Bias (including gender bias).		E&D Manager	embedded within the repertoire of E&D training. 2020 AS staff survey indicates >80% of feel comfortable in addressing bias.
2.5		Conduct additional briefing session on Unconscious Bias (including gender bias) with CEC.	Mar '18	E&D Manager Secretary to CEC	Increased awareness of barriers towards the promotion of E&D and what their roles and responsibilities are in advancing E&D practices across the RVC.
2.6	Engage and consult with staff regarding E&D issues and ensure this is considered at the highest level.	Investigate perception of E&D training, policy and practice through local E&D champions. Areas for concern will be fed into HR services for action planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan developed to address key areas of concern Action plan progress reported to CEC and published on E&D intranet page.	June '17	E&D Manager EDC Chair Departmental E&D champions	Action plan to address key areas of concern, with leadership from EDC Chair and all those responsible.
3. Develop and enhance the RVC's E&D policy and support framework					
3.1		Broadening the E&D Policy to include policy and practice on transgender staff and students, to be recommended to CEC by EDC. Policy impact to be monitored in future surveys and review of systems data.	Dec '17	EDC Chair and EDC Deputy Director HR	Policy approved, implemented and published on staff intranet. Advertised as available to all staff. AS 2020 survey indicates >80% of staff are aware of policy and feel able to support trans staff and students and tackle discrimination
3.2		Provide briefing sessions on	Nov '17	E&D	Briefing sessions held

	Update policy to reflect the diversity of the RVC and include guidance on transgender staff and students and other under- represented groups	Transgender Awareness to a range of stakeholders, such as senior staff, departmental E&D Champions and HR department.		Manager	
3.3		Hold staff consultations, including members from the staff transgender community, to support the development of Transgender Awareness Policy.	May 2021	E&D manager Deputy Director HR	Staff working group meetings completed and policy and impact agreed.
3.4		Publish Policy to support trans staff and students on the intranet	May '21	Website Manager	Guide published
3.5	Ensuring alignment between policy and practice	Develop and conduct an Equality Analysis, Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to measure any adverse impact including barriers to gender equality on all relevant new or existing policy, procedure, and practice.	Sep '17, ongoing	Principal, CEC, E&D manager and Departmental E&D Champions	Equality Analysis guidance developed. All relevant policies, procedures and functions equality impact assessed.
3.6		Gather data and analyse steps needed to bring policy and practice together and implement change with CEC approval.	Sep '19		CEC review and approve actions
4. Develop a culture that supports and encourages flexible working					
4.1		Run bi-annual staff workshops to increase visibility of flexible working options, resources and	April '18	E&D Manager, HR	Workshops held successfully on a bi-annual basis.

	Improve awareness and support of flexible working policy and process	RVC policy. To be held at various times to allow attendance of staff on different work patterns and attended by members of CEC, local E&D champion and RVC role models who successfully use flexible working arrangement		Employee Relations Manager	AS 2020 survey indicates >70% of staff are aware of policy and flexible working options at the RVC
4.2		Monitor workshop attendance and report to CEC through the annual Equal Opportunities Monitoring report.	Oct '18 and then annually	E&D Manager, EDC Chair	CEC receives report and ensures staff attend.
4.3		Investigate how to support clinical staff with flexible working and create a list of actions for future implementation.	June '18	VP Clinical Services, HoD CSS	Update policy and process if changes are required.
4.4		Develop a 'Flexible Working' section on the intranet as a focused hub of information for all staff with links to Flexible Working toolkit and Guide for Managers, as well as specific examples of RVC best practice.	October '21	Deputy Director of HR, HR Employee Manager.	Intranet page set up. AS2020 survey shows the staff access this new resource and find it useful.
4.5		'Managing Flexible Working' training to become a mandatory part of MDP and include understanding the benefits to business. All new managers of staff trained. Attendance	Sep '18	SDM	Attendance by new managers 100%. CEC monitors attendance.

		reported to CEC on an annual basis through the Equal Opportunities Monitoring report.			AS2020 survey shows staff feel the RVC is supportive of flexible working arrangements.
4.6		Remind managers to consult with HR prior to an official refusal of a flexible working request. The staff member will also be consulted.	Ongoing	Head of HR Operations	AS2020 survey indicates >80% of those who go through this process see it as fair and transparent.
4.7		Review ICP/APPP to include a focus on compatibility with models of flexible working	Dec '17	Head of HR Operations	Update the ICP/APPP process if review identifies changes is required.
5. Commitment to improving career progression					
5.1	Ensure the appraisal process maintains a focus on career progression and development	Ensure that effective professional and career development and training discussions form part of the appraisal process by providing guidance on career goals, workload management and perceived barriers to success.	Sep '18	HoDs Deputy Director of HR SDM	Guidance shared with all staff AS2020 survey indicates that >80% of staff find their appraisal includes discussion of key subjects and appraisers are perceived as capable.
5.2		Appraisal training to be a mandatory part of the MDP and for all new appraisers. It will be made available to existing appraisers to update their training. Training to include specific information on how to encourage women to develop their careers	Sep'18	SDM	Training updated and delivered. Completion rates reported. AS2020 survey indicates that >80% of staff perceive the appraisal as supportive of career progression.

5.3		Inform CEC of completion rates for appraisals to identify areas where this process is not occurring and take explicit action to achieve the target of all staff being appraised annually	Sep '17, then monthly during the last three months of appraisal cycle	Director of HR	>95% appraisal rate by 2020.
5.4		Focus on succession planning and the creation of deputy leader roles, developing and promoting leadership skills.	Ongoing	Principal, CEC, HoDs	Increased numbers of deputy positions by next AS application.
5.5	Ensure training supports career progression and is valued	Evaluate training for value added to career progression and/ or developmental objectives identified at appraisal by adding a question to training evaluation form.	Sep '17, then annually	SDM	Training feedback updated and evaluated training is reviewed and necessary changes are made to ensure training is fit for purpose
5.6		Review the MDP to determine if courses available form a coherent framework for development.	Sep '18	SDM, Deputy Director of HR	Changes to MDP courses if review identifies the framework could be enhanced.
5.7		Review the types of professional development opportunities that are valued by each cohort of staff, including non-clinical and clinical academics, researchers, and professional staff in order to map to institutional support and expenditure. CEC to approve a strategy based on audit outcomes	Sep '19	Workgroup led by SDM and Deputy Director HR	CEC approve strategy for professional development

5.8		Embed training time into the workload allocation model	Jan '19	WMG	Workload models recognise time for training.
5.9	Improve awareness and support of promotions process	Target annual academic promotions workshops targeted to role types (teaching, research, clinical)	Mar '18	Head of HR Operations	Workshops held
5.10		Appoint promotions advisors/mentors/role models who receive additional training on current policy and support mechanisms. These may be targeted to role types (teaching, research, clinical). Publish via a list on the intranet	Sep'18	Head of HR Operations	List published and available AS2020 survey indicates promotions advisors are a helpful resource
6. Supporting and developing female leaders					
6.1	Understand why staff feel unsupported with their leadership responsibilities	Conduct staff focus groups to identify key issues regarding 'leadership' and 'support'	July '18	SPWG	Focus groups held.
6.2		Establish a working group and deliver an action plan to be implemented	July '18	SPWG	Action plan presented to CEC March '18 and put into action.
6.3	Formal approach for development of future female leaders	Identify 10 female individuals with leadership potential to participate in management/leadership activity each year. Budgetary allowance to be made to facilitate this. Nominations by HODs or CEC after obtaining individuals permission or by application to a panel. HODs to ensure their workload allows for	Mar '18	Principal and CEC HoDs	Individuals report benefit of undertaking these activities through training evaluation forms AS2020 survey shows improved perceptions of diversity at Grades 8 &9

		these activities. A panel to decide on successful candidates			
6.4		Feature those selected in the RVC newsletter as role-models and their activities and success celebrated	April '19 and quarterly thereafter	Director of Marketing, E&D Manager	AS2020 survey shows women perceive that there are good role models at the RVC
6.5	Create a culture of mentorship and support	Clearly define 'mentorship' and 'coaching' with regard to the RVC's provision and identify further mentoring, coaching and shadowing opportunities for staff within and beyond RVC	Jan '19	SDM	AS2020 survey shows that (particularly female) staff perceive mentorship as valuable and supported at the RVC
6.6		Introduce mentorship into management responsibility by upskilling line managers on how to mentor staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include mentorship module in MDP and open this up to non- managers to enhance skills within the RVC as a whole. • Include mentoring time in workload allocation model. 	Mar '19	Head of HR Operations, HR Deputy Director, SDM	MDP module developed and active Mentoring time an accountable activity in the workload allocation model
6.7		Review and evaluate current mentoring arrangements including investigating the feasibility of automatic mentor allocation for new staff (at least 2 meetings within probation period)	Mar '19	CEC, EDC Chair, E&D champions	CEC approves future mentoring arrangements and implementation begins
6.8		Introduce a buddy system for staff planning extended periods of leave to provide informal	Sep '18	Line managers (as part of	Buddy system in place

		support and guidance during leave and upon their return to work in a mentoring capacity.		appraisal), SDM and E&D Manager.	
6.9	Development of an efficient, transparent workload allocation model to ensure equality	Identify activities that should be included in this model in addition to standard activities, including mentoring and professional development to ensure fair allocation of workload	Jan '19	WMG	Workload allocation model in place. AS2020 survey indicates >80% of academic staff find the model fair and equitable
6.10	Improve transparency	Create of a standardised Academic, Research and Clinical RVC CV which is publicly available	Sep '18	Principal, HoDs	CV published
7. Support for Staff with Caring Responsibilities					
7.1		Collect data to identify reasons for non-return after maternity/ adoption/ parental/caring leave and those that return and leave within six months.	May '18	Employee Relations Manager	Data available for trend analysis.
7.2	To ensure that numbers of females eligible for return in the REF assessments increase.	Collect data on the number of staff that make a specific request to increase their hours after a period of decreased hours of work	ongoing	Deputy Director HR, HoDs	Data collected available for analysis in reapplication for Bronze or application for Silver in 2021
7.3	To keep childcare provision on the agenda for future capital works	Formal review included in all capital planning projects, including community engagement.	Triggered by COO as appropriate	Capital Projects Management Group	Review nursery provision in the future capital works
7.4	To support those with caring responsibilities	Evidence interest in introduction of a carers' network at the RVC through a staff consultation via	Mar '18	EDC E&D Champions	Development of actions to improve support.

		EDC			
8. Additional Actions					
8.1	Data collection	Collect more meaningful data at the exit interview, including specific questions to identify any inequality issues involved in the decision to leave.	May '17		Data collected and analysed for E&D impact, issues reported to EDC and E&D adviser
8.2	To support equality of pay objectives	Implement modernisation of grade 9. All new grade 9 academic staff will start on the first spine point with progression through the scale, subject to performance. All existing grade 9 posts will be assimilated on to the appropriate spine point and red circled as appropriate	Jan '18	Director of HR, Head of HR Operations	Spine point structure implemented and publicised broadly. AS2020 survey indicates staff perceive fair pay distribution across genders
8.3	To determine why women are not progressing to senior roles.	Produce data to identify timing of milestones for individuals progressing to senior staff positions and their length of time in the institution, to assess which critical points are causing the 'leak'	December 2021	EDC, Gender Working Group	Better information on career progression and mentoring within the institution resulting in an action plan to address the leaky pipeline
8.4	To ensure that numbers of females eligible for return in the REF assessments increase	Continue to monitor and encourage gender parity in REF submissions, with ongoing commitment to ensuring all researchers are supported in producing returnable work	ongoing	VP Research and Innovation	Improved gender parity in submissions, more accurately reflecting the gender composition of the RVC.
8.5	Publicise available resource	Publicise Harassment Advisor Network as a resource to ensure staff are aware,	May '19 and thereafter annually	Deputy Director of HR	Communications in place

		particularly within the academic cohort. To be shared on the intranet, via Equality and Diversity Champions and the harassment advisor network.			AS2020 survey indicate a much-improved awareness amongst academics
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2. Key priorities for future action

Our new action plan (NAP) is evidence-based and was drafted in consultation with the RVC community through the AS2021 survey and associated workshops, through the consideration of HR data and in consultation with CEC. A NAP draft was presented to CEC in May 2022. This process helped to engage with senior management and the owners of the actions. The new appointment of a VP EDI highlights the RVC's commitment to all areas of EDI and this will provide additional support to the delivery of the NAP over the next 5 years.

The 4 identified key priority areas are:

- 1) Career and Leadership development
- 2) Equality and Diversity in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student population
- 3) Recruitment and Retention
- 4) Workplace Culture.

Within these themes we have prioritised action points as low (L), Medium (M) and High (H).

1) Career and leadership development

The appraisal process is a key part of supporting academic staff through career transitions and appraisal return rates have improved since our previous application in 2017. We want to maintain this upward trend in appraisal return rates (NAP 1.1). We have included an action on the APPP and SAPP as the AS2021 staff survey indicated a lack of clarity around promotion requirements. Whilst the gender balance at higher grades has improved and representation of females at grade 9 has increased since 2017 from 30% to 40% (Appendix 2 Table 2), one of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic was the temporary suspension of promotions in 2020. Additionally, there was a decrease in the number of SAPP applications in 2021 (Appendix Table 8). Thus, prioritising the running of promotion workshops will help to achieve clarity on the role of activities other than clinical work, teaching or research with respect to promotion and help with post-pandemic recovery (NAP 1.2).

Whilst preparing for this renewal application, it became apparent that improvement was needed in our baseline datasets in some areas to allow monitoring of progress over time. To measure trends in leadership, we need to first define which positions would classify as leadership positions and then collect baseline data on the gender profile of these positions across the RVC (NAP 1.3). There have been several good examples of co-leadership positions at the RVC and the evolution of several academic staff members utilising co-leadership in the leadership of their teaching modules. Continuation of this model will help to manage workloads and support diversity in leadership. There have been many examples of good practice regarding open calls for leadership positions, but we recognise that this is inconsistent (NAP 1.4). Similarly, as a small specialist institution committee turn-over can be challenging, so we must consider how best to ensure appropriate turn-over to allow for career progression opportunities (NAP 1.5, 1.6).

We have recently started to utilise a research management system, Worktribe. It presents potential to gather data on the gender and race of academic staff members submitting funding applications and generating research outputs (NAP 1.7, 1.8). These data can then be used to inform better the allocation of resources to under-represented groups and capture any E&D-related circumstances impacting productivity. This will allow us to make informed decisions on local interventions to redress the balance. This is an action for high priority as the EDI assessment of the research excellence framework (REF) 2021 indicated that females returned

less papers than males and our academic promotion pathway assesses the numbers of papers published, although quality remains the most significant metric.

There are no automatic pathways to promotion for professional services roles. Instead, career progression within the institution is via role re-grading where appropriate or open competition for roles at a higher grade. Whilst we are challenged by the availability of new positions within PSD (being a small specialist institution) and therefore opportunities for promotion, multiple initiatives intended to support the development of PTO staff (See Appendix Table 4 for staff roles classified as PTO) are included in the NAP. The Association of University Administrators (AUA) supports career development for professionals in the HE sector, including networking, conferences, and mentoring. The Association of University Administrators (AUA) Mark of Excellence recognises institutional commitment to career development and progression and RVC was one of the first HEIs to achieve this award in 2020. This demonstrates the RVC's investment in PTO staff and the success we have had in embedding the AUA continuing professional development (CPD) framework via the RVC Behaviours, which are integral to our developing people management culture. Retention of the award is a strategic priority in our Strategic Plan 2022-26 (NAP 1.9). In response to the AS 2021 staff survey, we recognise that we need to improve the diversity of role models. We hope to improve this and widen our celebration of staff by including featured career profiles of a diverse range of staff including those within PSD on our EDI pages (NAP 1.10). We will also review the suitability and uptake of internal and external job shadowing opportunities for PSD (NAP 1.11), encourage female PTO staff to apply for leadership training opportunities through use of targeted approaches (NAP 1.12) and develop a CPD pathway to allow PTO staff to achieve Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship (NAP 1.13). This opportunity will be available for academic staff to and it will bring recognition of excellence in teaching and learning, recognition of the contribution of support staff and support development and promotion.

2) Equality and Diversity in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student population

Analysis of our undergraduate and post-graduate populations shows an under-representation of males (Appendix 2 Table 1); although these figures are consistent with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data for undergraduate (77.6%), research postgraduate (66.4%) and taught postgraduate (70.7%) students in veterinary science. As future researchers, clinicians, and teachers in the field, it is important to strive towards a better gender balance. To promote this message in our taught courses we will continue to provide gender-related support and raise awareness of the AS charter through NAP 2.2 and will continue to support student mental health, which may also encompass gender related issues (NAP 2.1). We will continue to deliver outreach activities through our widening participation programmes as we strive to capture under-represented groups. We will also make sure through continued E&D training that our recruitment processes remain unbiased (NAP 3.5).

3) Recruitment and Retention

During the SAT process it was recognised that capturing data to determine whether there are any E&D related reasons for resignation requires modification of the capture form and additional data collection to allow meaningful analysis (NAP 3.1).

We remain challenged in the gender balance of staff on fixed term contracts (FTC). These are predominantly research staff supported by grant funding (64% F). The NAP focuses on the

support and development of researchers on FTC through the work of the Research Concordat working group (NAP 3.2-3.4). The appraisal of FTC staff will be reviewed to ensure the development section aligns with that outlined in the VITAE HE Excellence Award (NAP 3.2); mechanisms to minimise the impact of career breaks on FTC staff will be explored (NAP 3.3); and our HR Excellence in Research accreditation will be maintained (NAP 3.4). Mentors are available to support contract researchers and to give advice on career progression and training. We organise grant writing workshops to provide training and highlight opportunities available for staff on research FTC.

Finally, E&D training will be delivered to all staff with staff and student recruitment responsibilities to ensure that they are confident in addressing all aspects of EDI including unconscious bias (NAP 3.5).

4) Workplace Culture

Changes to the workplace culture at RVC firstly require evaluation of the current RVC policies to identify gaps. Identified gaps in gender related health issues such as menopause and fertility will be addressed (NAP 4.1 and 4.2).

The implementation of the WAM was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and this is now a high priority (NAP 4.3) as we recognise that the processes around workload allocation are not currently transparent and many staff surveyed reported that they regularly worked more than their contracted hours. The WAM launch in summer 2022 includes 9 categories to which time can be allocated, including staff development and training time.

The equality of pay status will be monitored through conducting an Equal Pay Audit (NAP 4.4). This will allow us to monitor and ensure that our systems value equal pay for equal work not only in the context of gender. Actions will be put in place to address inequalities in pay.

A culture where flexible working is normal will continue to be developed through increasing the visibility of the RVC flexible working and parental leave policies (NAP 4.5). Additionally, a parental buddy scheme for staff taking parental leave will be introduced to increase support for both male and female staff (NAP 4.6).

An environment where bullying and harassment are not tolerated will continue to be developed through promotion of the dignity at work and study policy. We currently train policy ambassadors on an annual basis, and we will continue to do so (NAP 4.7).

Finally, communication of the work undertaken relating to AS and all other EDI initiatives will be enhanced through improvement of the E&D pages on the intranet, production of departmental newsletters and provision of updates at all relevant departmental and RVC-wide meetings (NAP 4.8).

Section 3: Future action plan

In Section 3, applicants should evidence how they meet Criterion C:

- *An action plan is in place to address identified key issues*

3. Action plan

Key Priority		Objective	Actions	Rationale	Action owners	Timeframe	Measurable outcomes	Resources Required
Career and leadership development								
	1.1	Ensure the annual appraisal system is completed by all staff across all departments (M)	Continue to promote completion rates through emails, the use of the intranet	All staff appraisal rates were: 2016/17 - 69% 2017/18 - 73% 2019/20 - 67% 2020/21 - 68%	All HoDs with support from Staff Development Manager	ongoing annually	An upward trend in completion rates on collated on an annual basis	
	1.2	Continue to promote and raise awareness of the academic probation and promotion process across academic departments (H)	Academic Line managers and Head of Departments (HoDs), as appropriate, to continue to discuss career development during the annual appraisal and running annual promotions workshops. HoDs to signpost intranet academic promotion pages and generally raise awareness of the academic promotion process within their departments so staff can be conversant with the fully documented criteria and requirements.	AS2021 survey indicated lack of clarity around the requirements for promotion and where information could be found (36%F, 45%M agree that citizenship has a role; 57% F, 64% M know where to find information on development opportunities	Academic HoDs with support from Staff Development Manager and Head of HR Operations, Director of LWB	ongoing annually	AS survey 2026 indicates an improved clarity around the requirements for promotion.	

				and career progression). Reduction in rates for SAPP application during COVID-19.				
	1.3	Monitor and support a balanced and diverse gender profile in academic leadership positions (M)	Define and gather baseline data on the gender profile of academic leadership positions	AS2021 Only 38% of women and 43% of men thought that leadership roles were obtained in an open and transparent process	Academic HoDs, Departmental Administrators, VP EDI, Head of EDI	Dec-22	The gender profiles of leadership roles in teaching, research and citizenship roles are balanced and diverse.	
	1.4		Where possible encourage the filling of internal leadership positions through open calls and consider co-leadership positions where appropriate		Academic HoDs	ongoing	AS2026 survey indicates an improved perception on how leadership positions are obtained at the RVC	

	1.5	Create opportunities for academic career progression through timely review of committee membership and interest scoping (M)	Where possible ensure that committee roles operate on a fixed-term basis supported by timely monitoring and flagging of expiration of terms	AS2021 Only 54% of women and 63% of men thought that RVC committees value diverse opinions and are inclusive	Head of Governance, VP EDI, Head of EDI	ongoing annually	Documented rotation of committee roles and maintenance of diverse and balanced gender profile on each committee. AS survey 2026 indicates an improved perception of diversity and inclusivity	
	1.6		Include an annual call for interests in committee membership to all staff to identify opportunities for turn-over.		Head of Governance, VP EDI, Head of EDI	ongoing annually		
	1.7	Monitor if there is an impact of protected characteristics on differences in research outputs and research funding applications made (H)	Collect quantitative data on gender and race of staff research outputs and funding applications made annually.	REF equality analysis highlighted that the numbers of papers being returned by females are less than males. We need to better understand the reason behind this, particularly view of academic	VP RI, VP EDI, Head of EDI	ongoing biannually	Data collated and analysed	RO/BIU staff time/HR
	1.8		Review data on an annual basis		VP RI, VP EDI, Head of EDI	ongoing annually	Data reviewed and documented	RO/BIU staff time/HR

				promotion criteria				
	1.9	Improve the development of staff within professional services departments and PTO staff in professional support roles (M)	Retain the Association of University Administrators (AUA) Mark of Excellence- including enhancing engagement with AUA activity		COO, HR and AUA MoE project team	May-23	Re- award	
	1.10		Profile careers of professional services and PTO staff at various levels	AS2021 – Diverse role models are represented at the RVC – only 39% of women and 48% of men agreed that diverse role models were represented at the RVC	Staff Development Manager and Head of EDI	May-23	AS survey 2026 indicates that diverse role models are represented at the RVC	
	1.11		Review suitability of and uptake of the internal and external job shadowing opportunities and re-promote these opportunities		Staff Development Manager	Jul-23	Documented recording of the uptake and of feedback from those who took advantage of the opportunities to determine how useful they were.	External partners

	1.12		Encourage women in professional services departments and PTO staff in professional support roles to apply for leadership training via targeted emails		HoDs of PSD and academic departments with non-academic staff		Documented attendance of women from PSD at leadership training initiatives	
	1.13		Development of a CPD scheme for achieving HEA Fellowship including PTO staff		Director of LWB	Jan-24	Provision of a route for professional services staff to achieve HEA Fellowship to support career development and progression	
Equality and Diversity in the undergraduate and post-graduate student population								
	2.1	Raise awareness of mental health support available at the RVC (M)	Highlight support services to new students in the induction process including KickStart and 5 ways to be well. Further development of 5 ways to be well and campaigns throughout the year to promote positive wellbeing and mental health	Comments on student survey. Survey results – 53% overall agreed that RVC supports my mental health and	Director of LWB	Ongoing annually	AS 2026 Survey results indicates that > 75% of students agreed that RVC supports their mental health and wellbeing	

			<p>Highlight services available through the undergraduate tutorial system</p> <p>Signpost guides available for all staff so they can support students</p>	<p>wellbeing (51%M, 54%F, 38% non-binary or PNS)</p>				
	2.2	<p>Raise awareness of E and D initiatives for the student population including Athena Swan (M).</p>	<p>Provide briefings on Athena Swan, transgender awareness policy and dignity at work and study policy to SU.</p>	<p>Poor engagement in AS survey (25%), poor awareness of AS in survey (22% M, 18% F, 31% non-binary or PNS; 18% overall). However, 64% agreed that RVC supports gender equality (62%M, 66% F, 33% non-binary or PNS). Only 24% aware of Transgender policy (24%M, 24%F, 31% non-binary or PNS)</p>	<p>Director of LWB, RVC Chaplain, Head of EDI</p>	Jul-27	<p>Student completion of the AS 2026 survey >40%</p> <p>>50% aware of the transgender awareness policy</p>	SU time

Recruitment and Retention								
	3.1	To identify if there are gender equality related issues influencing staff resignations (L)	Collect EDI data from exit interviews to identify reasons for resigning.	Data collected in the previous award period (2017-2022) was minimal and could not be analysed	Head of HR Operations, HR Employee Relations Manager, Head of EDI	Jul-25	Data reviewed annually and used to inform EDI action plans and policies	
	3.2	Monitor and review the development of and support for research staff on fixed-term contracts (M)	Review the appraisal of FTC to ensure the development section aligns with the training outlined in the VITAE HE Excellence Award	We have a high % of female research staff on FTC (63%) and transition to academic positions is a challenge	Staff development manager	Jan-23		
	3.3		Explore mechanisms for supporting research staff on FTC to minimise the impact of career breaks		VP RI, VP EDI, Head of EDI	Jan-25		
	3.4		Maintain our HREiR accreditation		Research concordat working group	Ongoing		

	3.5	Continue to support best EDI practice for recruitment (M)	Continue to deliver EDI training to all staff.	Only 60% of women vs 75% of men said they were confident in addressing unconscious bias in an interview	VP EDI and Head of EDI, Staff Development Manager	Ongoing	AS 2026 survey indicates an increase in staff confident in addressing unconscious bias.	
Workplace Culture								
	4.1	Further develop our policy framework to support an inclusive working environment (L)	Create a menopause policy or adjust existing policies that encompasses both the menopause and the perimenopause period and raise awareness of the policy	AS survey: 17%F, 3%M and 17%PNS have been affected by issues arising from the menopause. Currently, RVC has no menopause policy.	Head of EDI and Deputy HR Director	Jul-24	Policy produced. AS 2026 survey reports that >70% of staff aware of policy. Demonstration that the policy has been impactful through anonymised case studies	

	4.2		Create a policy on IVF to support staff dealing with infertility or fertility concerns and raise awareness of the policy	Currently, RVC has no policy.	Head of EDI and Deputy HR Director	Jul-24	Policy produced. AS 2026 survey reports that >70% of staff aware of policy. Demonstration that the policy has been impactful through anonymised case studies	
	4.3	Continue to develop a working environment where the workload is shared appropriately (H)	Continue to develop the Workload Allocation Model to include teaching, clinical, research, training assessment and other relevant categories	Only 10% of F, 4% M and 3% of PNS work their contracted hours and nothing more. 48% F, 65% M and 64% PNS regularly work more than their contracted hours. 28% F, 25% M and 39% PNS work extra hours because they need to in order to get	Deputy COO, Deputy Principal and Acting vice Principal	Jul-25	WAM implemented and training received. AS 2026 survey reports that >70% of staff aware of the WAM and >50% of staff report that their work-life balance has improved over the last 5 years.	

				their work done.				
	4.4	Continue to monitor equality of pay status (H)	Conduct an Equal Pay Audit	Equal Pay Audit last carried out in 2015.	Equal Pay Working Group, HR/RVC Union/ Head of EDI	Dec-23	Minimise pay inequalities	
	4.5	Continue to raise awareness of flexible working practices (M)	Review and update the Flexible Working Policy. Increase the visibility and understanding of various flexible working and parental leave policies and processes through running biannual staff workshops	64% F, 63% M and 45% PNS agreed that their manager would be open to discussing flexible working arrangements; 75%F, 80%M and 55% PNS reported that	Employee Relations Manager	Jul-24	More staff make use of the flexible working policy. Particularly in clinical departments. Measured impact through case studies	

	4.6		Introduction of a parental buddy scheme for staff taking parental leave	important RVC meetings are held within core contractual hours (9-5pm); 37%F, 40%M and 9%PNS reported that RVC meetings are held within core working hours (10-2pm). Very few people applied for shared parental leave (1.6%F, 4%M and 0%PNS) and during and after returning to work 75% women felt supported but only 62% men. 62%F, 79%M and 76% PNS aware of flexible working policy.	Head of HR operations	Jul-24	AS survey 2026, >80% of staff report that they are aware of the policies and that their department supports flexible working. Documented uptake of the parental buddy scheme and monitoring effectiveness through case studies.	
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	4.7	Continue to develop a working environment where bullying and harassment are not tolerated (M)	Promote the Dignity at Work and Study Policy. Continue with annual training for Dignity at Work and Study Ambassadors	AS survey 2020: 66%F, 76%M and 72%PNS aware of Dignity at Work Policy, but 37%F 43%M and 48%PNS aware of Dignity at Work Ambassadors. AS 2020 Survey 42%F, 53%M and 24%PNS satisfied with how their department details with bullying and harassment.	VP EDI, Head of EDI	Jul-25	AS survey 2026: >70% of staff report they are satisfied with how their department deals with bullying and harassment.	
	4.8	Improve communication of work relating to Athena Swan and all other E and D initiatives (H)	Improve Equality and Diversity pages on the intranet to ensure they are up-to-date and informative. EDI newsletter to be produced by each department termly. Continue to include EDI updates on all departmental and whole RVC meetings.	AS survey: 67% of staff were aware of Athena Swan, but more men (77%) than women (63%); 34% F, 54%M and 7.4% of PNS agreed	VP EDI and Head of EDI. External relations. E&D champions. HoD. Principal. E&D communications subgroup	Jul-27	AS produces communications on an annual basis to show progress. AS survey 2026: >80% of staff aware of	Internal communications team.

				that the RVC's commitment to the Athena Swan charter had had a positive impact on addressing gender equality at RVC. Only 57%F, 64%M and 26%PNS reported that they knew where to find more information on development opportunities and promotion at the college.			Athena Swan and >75% report that RVC commitment to the charter has had a positive impact on gender issues.	
The SAT process								
	5.1		Appointment of deputy co-leads and succession of SAT planning		VP EDI, head of EDI, current co-chairs	Jan-23		
	5.2		Undertake a revised annual staff survey including an impact assessment section in order to inform progress. Modify action plan accordingly		VP EDI, Head of EDI	Ongoing annually		Internal communications team.

Appendix 1: Culture survey data

Not applicable to this University renewal application.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Table 1: Students at foundation, UG, PGT and PGR level

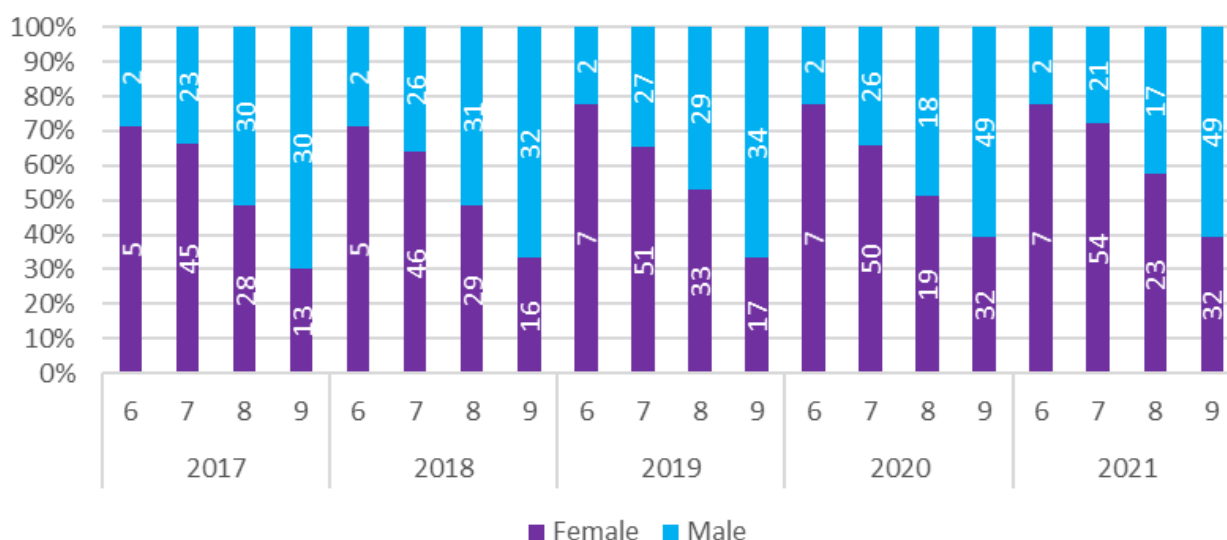
Students	Female	Male	Prefer not to say
2020/21	2145 (78.1%)	595 (21.7%)	5 (0.2%)
Undergraduate	1607 (82.0%)	349 (17.8%)	3 (0.2%)
Postgraduate Taught	462 (69.6%)	201 (30.3%)	1 (0.2%)
Postgraduate Research	76 (62.3%)	45 (36.9%)	1 (0.8%)
2019/20	2057 (78.5%)	556 (21.2%)	6 (0.2%)
Undergraduate	1581 (81.3%)	358 (18.4%)	5 (0.3%)
Postgraduate Taught	402 (72.0%)	156 (28.0%)	0 (0%)
Postgraduate Research	74 (63.3%)	42 (35.9%)	1 (0.9%)
2018/19	2054 (77.3%)	599 (22.5%)	4 (0.2%)
Undergraduate	1584 (80.2%)	388 (19.7%)	3 (0.2%)
Postgraduate Taught	395 (68.7%)	180 (31.3%)	0 (0%)
Postgraduate Research	75 (70.1%)	31 (29.0%)	1 (0.9%)

NB: There are no students at foundation level at the RVC.

Table 2: Academic staff by contract function

Table 1: Mapping of RVC Staff descriptors to Athena SWAN definitions		
Athena SWAN	RVC descriptor	Staff included
Teaching and Research & Teaching Only	ACADEMIC	Teaching staff (>6hrs/wk) with/without clinical and/or research responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching only • Primarily teaching, some/no clinical work • Mix of teaching and research, some/no clinical work • Mix of teaching/research/clinical/management responsibilities
Research only	RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research only • Primarily research, some clinical work
Professional Staff	PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All professional and support staff • Technicians, manual and agricultural workers • Primarily clinical work, no teaching • Veterinary nurses

Academic staff by gender and pay grade 2017-2021



Research staff by gender and pay grade 2017-2021

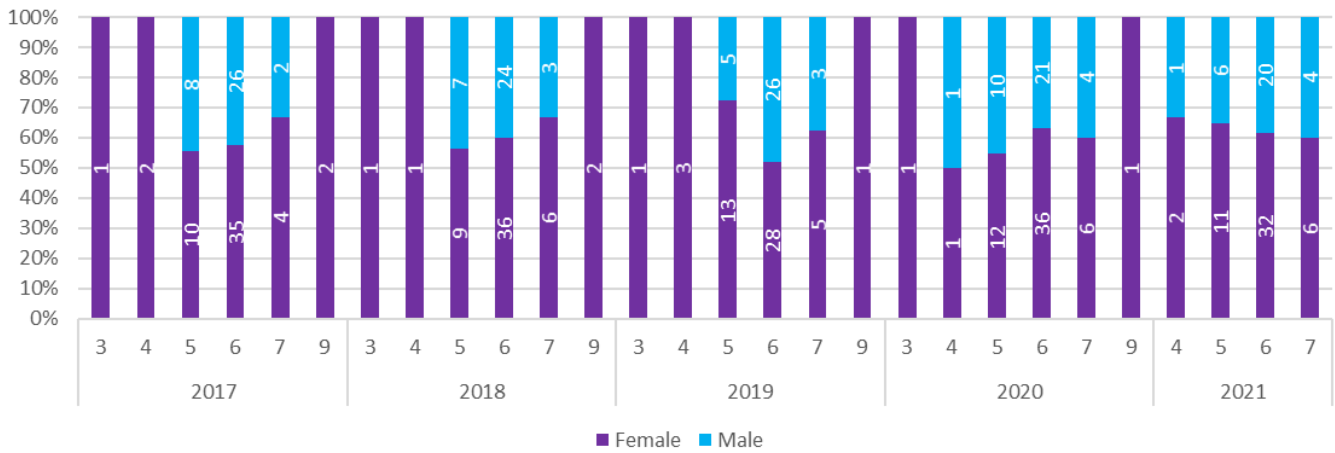


Table 3: Academic staff by contract type

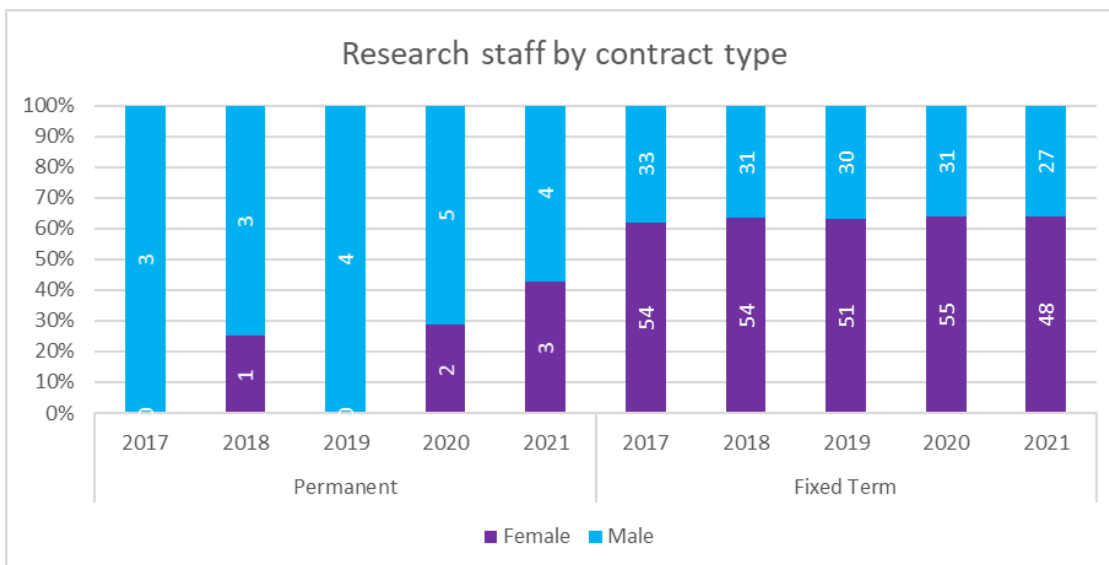
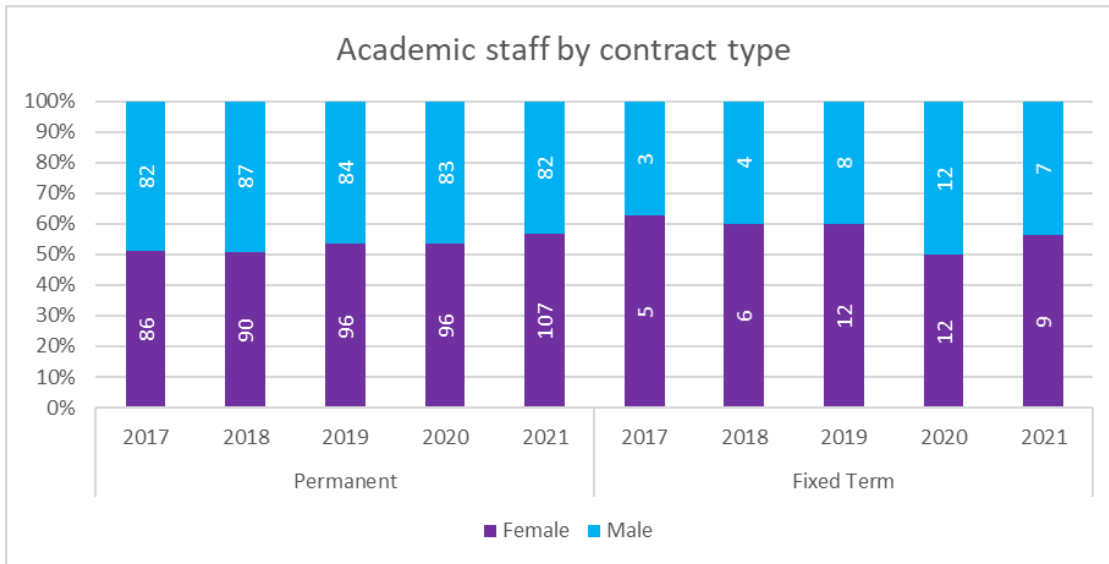


Table 4: Professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff by job family

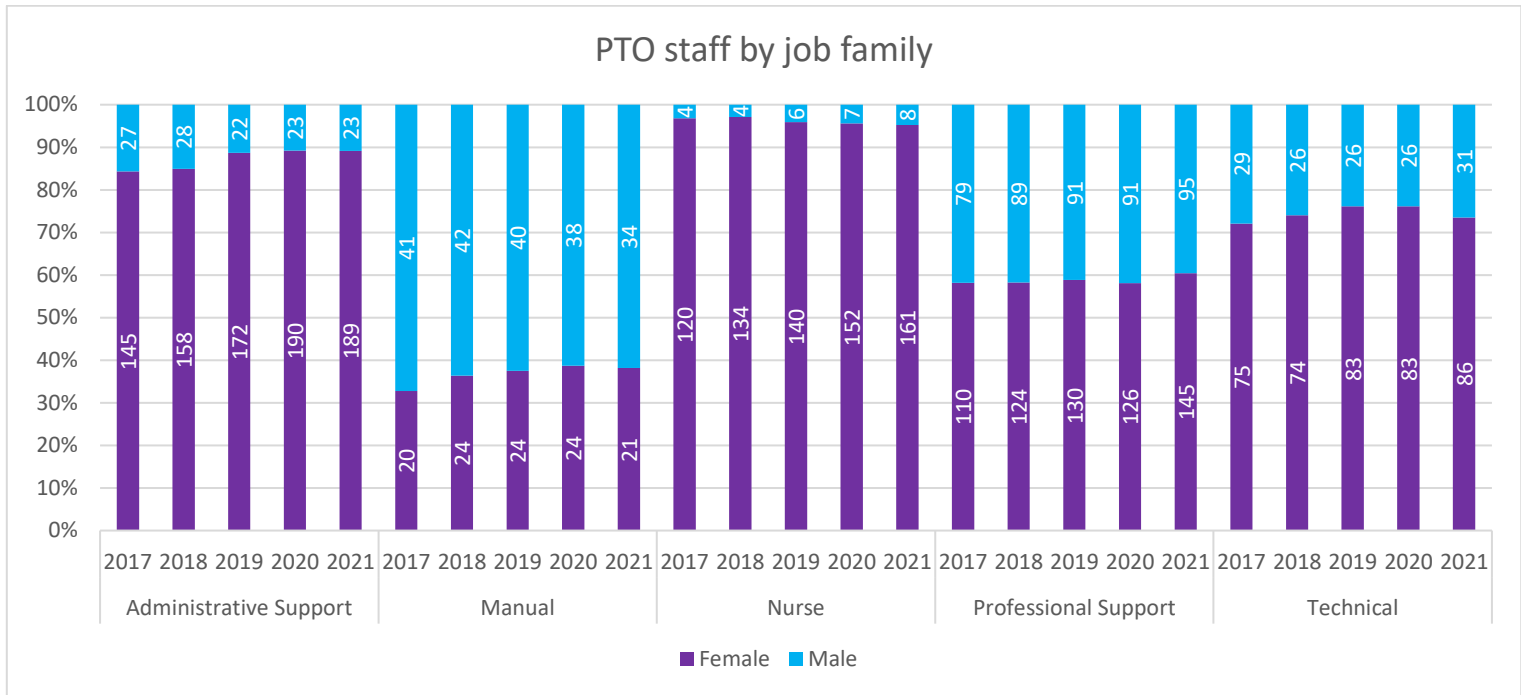
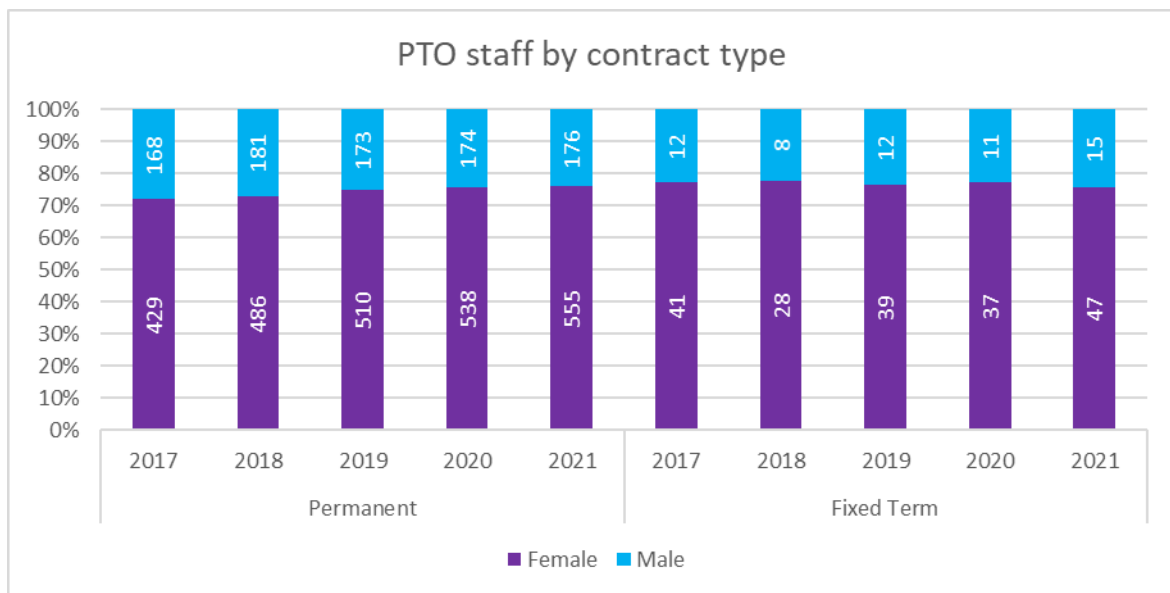
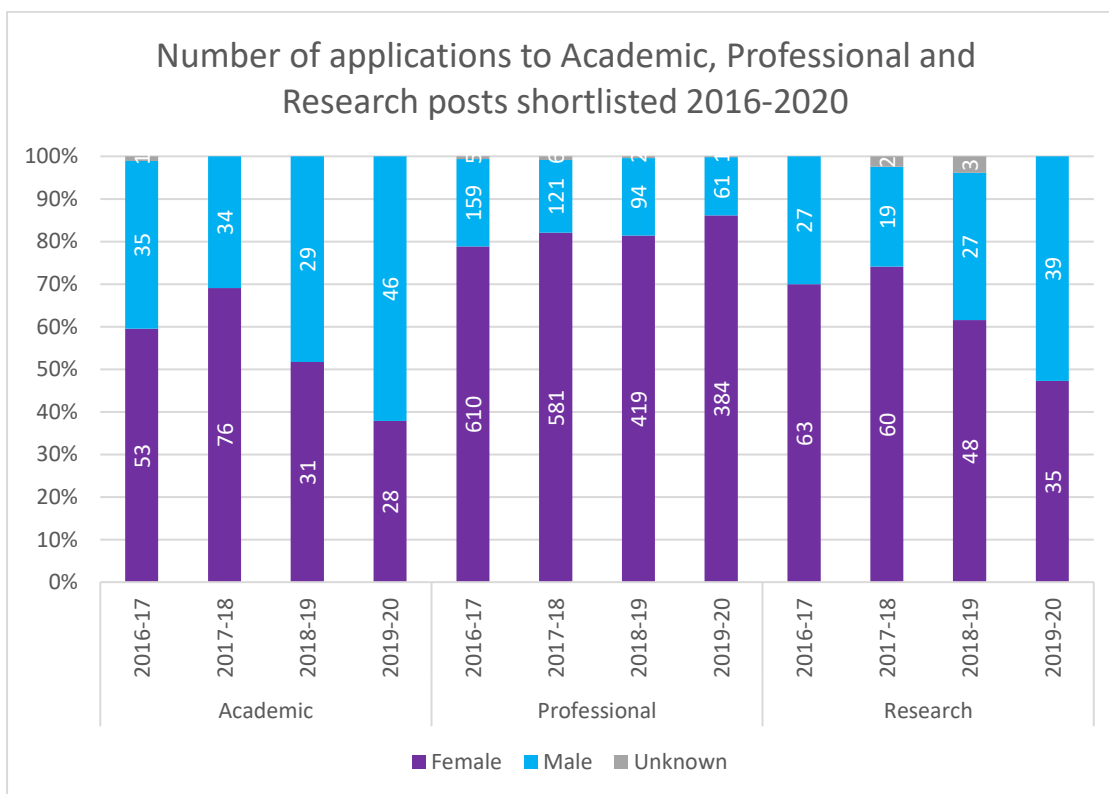
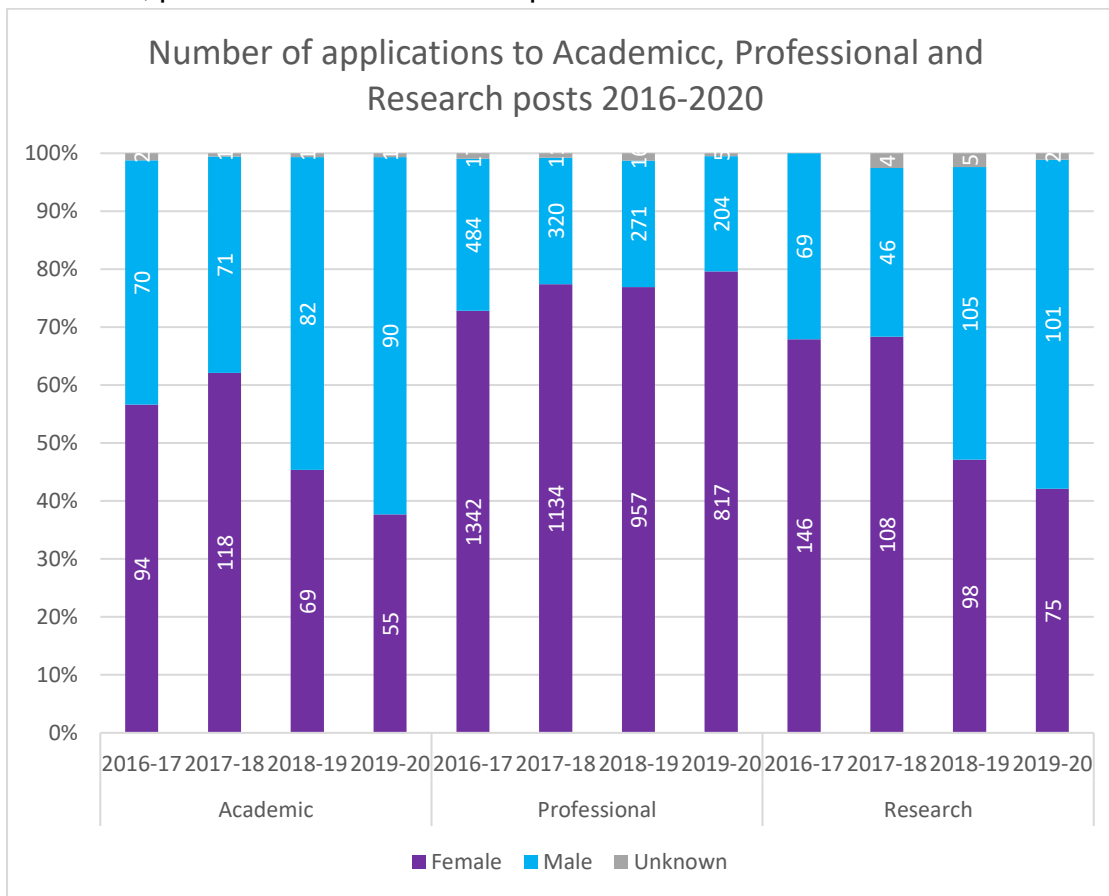


Table 5: PTO staff by contract type



Tables 6 and 7: Applications, shortlist and appointments made in recruitment to academic, professional and research posts



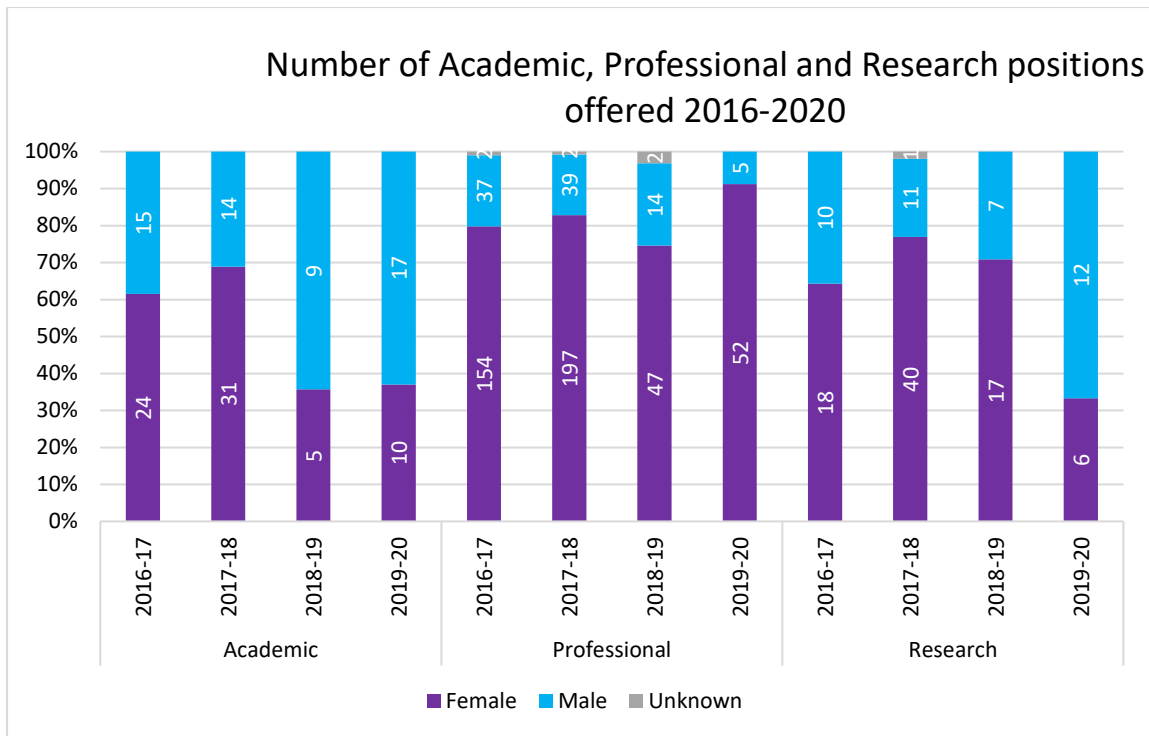
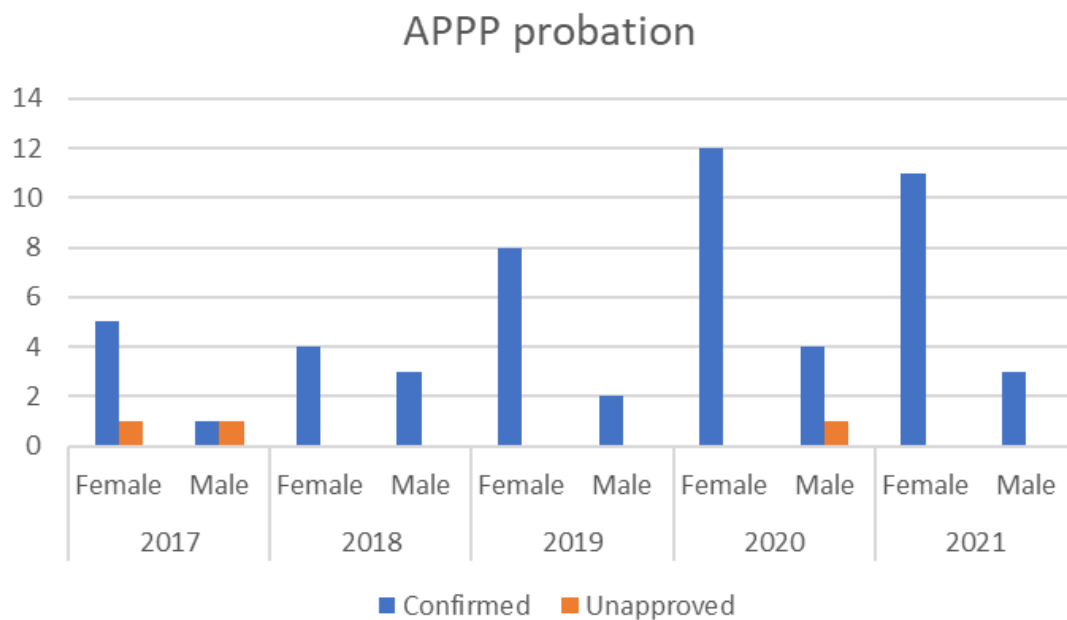
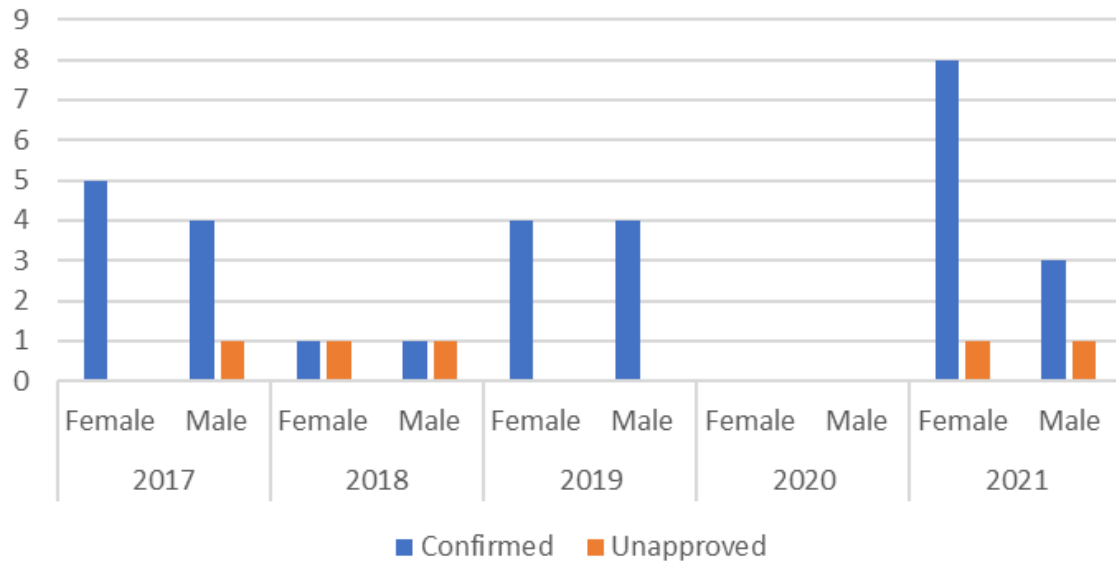


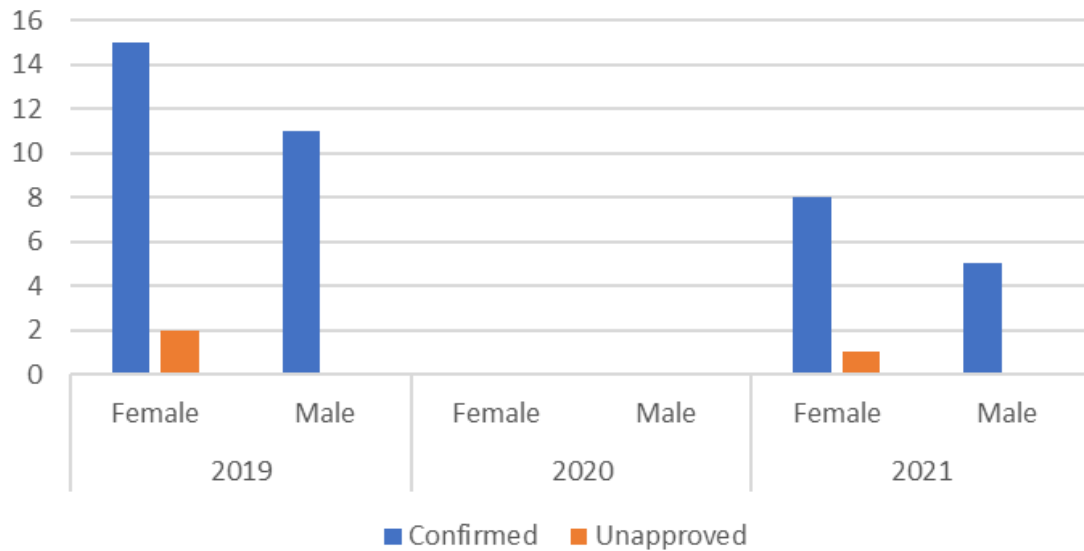
Table 8: Applications and success rates for academic promotion



APPP promotion

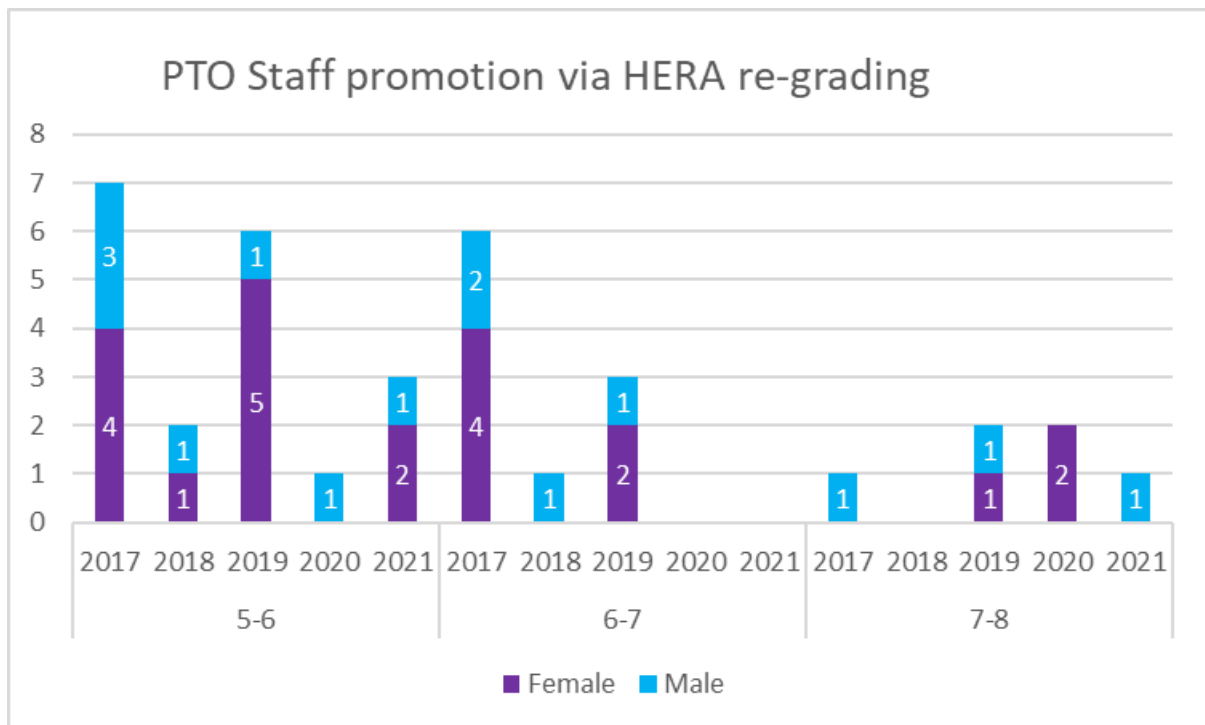


SAPP promotion



NB. APPP and SAPP promotion was not considered in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 10: Applications and success rates for PTO progression



Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

Acronym	Full Description
AC	Academic
AP	Action point
APPP	Academic probation and promotion process
AS	Athena Swan
AUA	Association of University Administrators
BVetMed	Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine undergraduate degree
CBS	Comparative biomedical science
CEC	College Executive Committee
COO	Chief operating officer
CPD	Continuing professional development
CSS	Clinical sciences and services
BIU	Business improvement unit
E&D	Equality and diversity
EDC	Equality and diversity committee
EDI	Equality, diversity and inclusion
EIA	Equality impact assessment
F	Female
FT	Full time
FTC	Fixed term contract
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher education academy
HESA	Higher education statistics agency
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human resources
HREiR	Human resources excellence in research
ICP	Individual career pathway
IVF	In vitro fertilisation
LBGT	Lesbian bisexual gay and trans
LWB	Learning and Wellbeing
M	Male
MDP	Management development program
MoE	Mark of Excellence
NAP	New action plan
PAG	Principal's advisory group
PAP	Previous action plan
PNS	Prefer not to say (gender)
PPS	Pathobiology and population sciences
PS	Professional support
PSD	Professional services department
PT	Part time
REF	Research excellence framework
PTO	Professional-technical and operational
RO	Research office
RVC	Royal Veterinary College
SAT	Self-assessment team
SAPP	Senior academic promotion process
SDM	Staff development manager

SU	Student Union
VNs	Veterinary Nurses
VP EDI	Vice Principal for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
VP RI	Vice Principal for Research and Innovation
VPs	Vice Principals
WAM	Work allocation model