



Royal Microscopical Society

# First steps in creating a more inclusive Society

Version 1: September 2022

## Statement

The RMS is the world's oldest Society dedicated to the science of microscopy, cytometry and imaging. The Society is committed to promoting an inclusive scientific community that brings together people from all backgrounds, with the widest possible range of talents, perspectives and experiences. Across the breadth of its activities, from committees, scientific events, outreach to education and publications, the Society is committed to fostering an inclusive and equity-conscious environment, in which all can thrive, feel comfortable and be heard.

### Our commitment

- We are committed to embedding EDI&A best practice into all of our activities
- We are committed to this ongoing process and recognise that it will develop and evolve
- We are committed to communicating more effectively with our community
- We are committed to supporting the needs of the microscopy, imaging and flow cytometry communities and developing initiatives that can support them throughout their careers
- We are committed to promoting a culture where everyone is respected, heard and valued

The RMS recognises that it has work to do, and will actively continue to pursue opportunities for improvement and implement change. Our strategy will be added to and refined in response to new legislation and societal changes, as well as the insights of its membership and the wider scientific community.

## Working Document

This is a working document which will be reviewed and updated as and when required.

This initial review, that is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive is intended to develop and progress over time. It covers governance, committee/group membership, events, and Society membership in some depth. In future updates we will also focus more closely on Society awards, RMS employees, Publications, Outreach, Education and professional development and communications and marketing.

We welcome discussion and scrutiny of our proposals and developments and aim to be transparent and open in all of our policies and our actions.

## Governance and Leadership

Starting points	Planned Developments	Goals	Review/Action date
EDI&A features in leadership discussions and on agendas	Looking at how senior council and executive positions are filled, succession planning, transparency and access to these positions. Develop procedures and strategies that can be implemented to improve on this.	To be able to make transparent and readily available information on the process and clearly communicate how people can get involved in senior positions at the RMS.	Already included on agendas and is an ongoing discussion.
Observational data on leadership demographics is shared internally	To involve existing senior council, executive and EDIA Group in training and to instigate initiatives that will make the RMS more accessible and improve EDI&A.	To be able to demonstrate active and proactive action towards improving D&I . Include a review of all RMS Literature, including but not limited to Staff Handbook, Committee Handbooks, By-Laws to ensure consistency.	Literature – Reviewed and updated as required.
Society-wide use of code of conduct.	Full bi-annual review of code of conduct to be initiated. Improve visibility of this and demonstrate wider acknowledgement/adherence of it. Needs to be a transparent and publicised process for how issues are dealt with to show that we are open to change, growth and improvement.	To ensure that the RMS is forward thinking and is/is seen to be transparently and proactively dealing with issues.	Reviewed and updated as required.
EDI&A is currently overseen and supported by the Chief Executive, Events and HR Director and the EDI&A Group	Wider involvement from trustees, and update the annual trustee training. RMS Office Staff training.	We want EDI&A to be embedded within the Society so that it becomes an instinctive and unconscious consideration.	Developments and changes to be shared on the EDI&A group page and discussed and reported at council meetings.

### Focus on:

- **Ensure EDI&A is integrated into all policy planning and decision making from the outset.**
- **Improving communication around and publishing of plans, developments and goals to invite scrutiny and demonstrate transparency and best practice.**
- **Ensure all new activities are assessed for impact and that they meet and support our commitments to EDI&A.**

## Science Section Committees, CAB, Groups, FIGs

Starting points	Planned Developments	Goals	Review/Action date
Are there barriers to people joining or nominating people to join a committee or group? Is there a perception of required status or association?	We'll be actively encouraging members who are historically underrepresented to join committees, groups and to become members. We will add more information to the committees and groups area of the website, with encouraging testimonials from committee members.	To increase the diversity of the RMS committees and ensure good representation across the microscopy, imaging and cytometry communities and initially, better representation across the UK.	Testimonials and 'Join a Committee' page to be add by December 2022.
We have instigated open calls and votes for committee/group memberships on each website page and we periodically promote this through the website and our social media	Put in place a clear, coordinated strategy for promoting this across all of our channels as well as at our events.	For the process of joining any group within the RMS to be transparent, accessible, representative and welcoming.	Biennial newsletter/social media campaign dedicated to committee/group membership. Advertisement in all RMS event programmes to be in place from January 2023.
We have moved to fewer in-person committees which should enable greater opportunity for attendance, but retaining some in-person meetings to allow for networking.	As with events, instigate a review of accessibility provisions, inclusive scheduling and make information on attending more readily available.	To ensure that participating in a committee is perceived as having as few barriers as possible.	Information on this to be included in the new 'Join a Committee' page, ready for December 2022.
Each section committee has a handbook on committee membership. Other groups within the Society adhere to the RMS Code of Conduct as their formation and activities are more fluid.	Section committee handbooks need to be reviewed and updated to ensure EDI&A is included.	Committees should be/seen to be forward thinking, have clear objectives and have D&I integrated into all activities and objectives.	Annual review at Autumn committee meetings, and ad-hoc updates as other documentation changes.

### Focus on:

- Improving the visibility of and communication around membership of committees and groups within the RMS with a focus on making them more welcoming and inclusive.
- To diversify committee/group membership so that it is representative of the whole microscopy, cytometry and imaging community and can benefit from that diversity of experience, background and perspective.

## Events, Courses, Workshops, Conferences and Meetings

Starting points	Planned Developments	Goals	Review/Action date
Overall event programme aims for variety of locations, event types and incorporate a mixture of virtual, in-person and hybrid.	We are looking at future programming and referring to an inclusivity calendar, looking at how we can ensure as much as possible, we are not excluding anyone on the basis of where and when we have chosen to host an event.	To provide a varied programme of events that meets the needs of the microscopy, imaging and cytometry community and that demonstrates a commitment to and success in, inclusion.	Annual review/publication (February) into overall success of accessibility and inclusivity of event calendar. In addition, each event assessed as put forward.
Venues are chosen in terms of their accessibility and full information is gathered and shared, on accessibility and provision for a range of needs and requirements, the options for dietary inclusion and sustainability.	We are trying to increase and improve the amount of information that is available to potential attendees prior to booking. Adding additional information to event web pages so that this information is readily available rather than having to be searched for. This is also included in the event booklets.	To create an easy to understand system of sharing this information that is standardised across our events. Accessibility needs to be addressed as a separate commitment on our website as well to address all areas not just events.	As each event is added, this information will be included on the 'Information' tab of the event page. Monthly reviews (during events team meetings) of all active events to ensure full information is available and shared.
Virtual events have optional closed captions and live transcripts.	We will continue to make these available at all virtual events and will offer this opportunity at committee meetings as well.	Anyone attending a virtual event (or meeting) should not have to ask for this provision to be made and should be able to access it freely and easily according to their need.	Closed captions and live transcript has been added to event preparation checklists.
The perceived gender balance is included in the planning of an event to ensure good representation. Post event (mmc) we run analytics to assess our overall gender balance including submitted talks. We actively encourage the invitation of speakers that are 'new' to the events we run to provide new perspectives and opportunities.	We will look at how we market our events and whether the language or means of delivery is exclusionary. We will train our marketing team in inclusive marketing and social media. We will continue to encourage and investigate means to support scientific organisers in encouraging diversity at their events, providing lists of previous speakers to assist organisers with their selections.	To ensure that our events are inclusive and perceived to be inclusive.	Marketing training to be undertaken by December 2022. Continual guidance and monitoring for events.

Event materials (programme booklets and course notes) are provided in digital formats and documents are checked for accessibility issues including font styles, colours and alternative text on images and figures.	We need to do more in terms of ensuring flyers and promotional materials also meet a higher standard. We need to be objectively looking at the language used. We need to instigate a more rigorous procedure to ensure that this is consistently and universally applied.	To ensure that all materials produced are inclusive and accessible and that we continue to monitor the standard on a regular basis.	Checked on an event by event basis to ensure standards are maintained. All staff producing literature to receive full/further training by December 2022.
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#### Focus on:

- **To ensure that the RMS provides a range of events that serve the needs of whole of the microscopy, imaging and cytometry community as inclusively as possible.**
- **To continue to find ways to improve the diversity and representation at our events.**
- **To improve and develop all published event materials to make them more accessible and inclusive.**

## Membership

Starting points	Planned Developments	Goals	Review/Action Date
Membership demographics – we are aware that our membership, although international, is geographically clustered in certain areas and we are not reaching microscopists that we could be supporting.	Including support for new members from developing nations, to enable them to be able to access the benefits of Society membership.	To broaden the membership base internationally and to be able to reach and support more international microscopists.	Membership support to be launched January 2023 and reviewed and updated as required.
Membership categories have been similar for many years and do not represent the many career stages of the community	Updating the categories for 2023 to provide new levels of membership, greater transparency and highlight opportunities for new members, particularly those outside of the UK.	Demonstrate that we are keen to support our members through every stage of their career.	Membership support to be launched January 2023 and reviewed and updated as required.
Membership Benefits are not used by all members.	Annual review of the usage of benefits, are we missing something in the marketing?	Make everyone more aware of the opportunities through strategic targeted communications, so we can better support the membership.	Annual review of benefits taken in March each year to guide promotion of membership opportunities.
Encouraging new members	New categories (discussed above) should highlight opportunities to new members. Additionally publishing the new member profiles on the website.	To foster an inclusive and welcoming environment and demonstrate that the Society is here for all working in microscopy.	Member profiles will be added to the website from December 2022.

### Focus on:

- **Further promote the opportunities available to members.**
- **Encourage wider diversity of membership.**
- **We want to promote an inclusive and welcoming environment.**