

We are building the world's best
veterinary group

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy

IVC Evidensia “The Group” has both a legal and moral duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and ensure good relations between key equality strands. Most countries have legislation that require equality of characteristics including age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity. Some countries have other requirements and more details can be found at the end of the document. This document is about ensuring we comply with legislation but more importantly it is about promoting the cultural and moral values that our colleagues and clients deserve.

In line with our Code of Conduct Principle 1 “Respecting People and Animals”, we promote equal opportunities and we respect and acknowledge the diversity of colleagues who work within IVC Evidensia as well as the clients and other stakeholders that are part of the wider community we work with.

Equality and diversity are essential factors that contribute to the strength and continued growth of any business. The Group is focused on recognising the achievements and value of every individual and therefore aims to create an environment in which all are valued, where talents are fully utilised and organisational goals are achieved through the principle of inclusivity.



Living our Values



Caring

About our colleagues and want to ensure that everyone feels respected and taken seriously and do not have to face discrimination or bias in the workplace



Daring

We want you to have your voice heard, even if it goes against the status quo



Sharing

We want all of our colleagues to feel part of our family and share the same values and ethics

Key Definitions

Equality	Breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.
Diversity	Recognising differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions.
Inclusion	The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised.
Dignity	A sense of decency and respect.



EDI Goals

Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and test of our civilisation

- Mahatma Gandhi

Our EDI goals are to:



Be able to bring our authentic self to work and feel accepted within the team



Building a culture where everyone feels able to talk about and access the support they need



Build a culture where all colleagues are valued and empowered to thrive and contribute to our success



Challenge expressions of prejudice and seek to rectify any discriminatory practices or behaviour



Build a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects and understands our colleagues and clients



Meet our legal obligations.

Benefits of EDI



of colleagues and job seekers feel a diverse workforce is important when evaluating job offers



of companies with a formal D&I program show an improved bottom line



is how much more productive businesses can be with a diverse workforce



of businesses which have diverse boards are more likely to realise higher profits

Source: 2020 Glassdoor Survey

Benefits of Diversity & Inclusion

To Organisations

2x likely to meet or exceed financial targets

3x likely to be high-performing

8x likely to achieve better business outcomes

6x likely to be innovative and agile

To Employees

4.6x likely to feel empowered to perform their best work

3.8x likely to say they are proud to work for their company

Employees who say they are able to be their authentic self at work

Source: Mackinsey Survey 2019

INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY	ATTRACTS TALENTS	REDUCES TURNOVER
EXPANDS INNOVATION	BUILDS REPUTATION	INCREASES PROFIT
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES	INCREASES CREATIVITY	BETTER DECISION MAKING

Source: Vantage Circle

5 Pillars of Creating an Inclusive Workplace

1

AWARENESS

- Measure current status to benchmark KPI objectives
- Raise awareness around EDI initiatives
- Involve all colleagues
- Communicate cultural changes to come

2

ADMINISTRATION

- Setup systems, processes, policies & objectives that make everyone accountable for EDI
- Launch strategy

3

ACTION

- Implement strategy through actions & tactical moves
- Work with diverse suppliers, promote engagement
- Education & Training

4

ALIGNMENT

- Consistent analysis, review, measurement versus objectives
- Communicate progress
- Adapt & revise where necessary

5

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Senior Management buy in
- Roles and responsibilities
- KPIs

Equality

Equality is a process in which we seek to eradicate discrimination and create a fairer society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Equality requires steps to address existing inequality. It is not 'equity' -treating everyone the same. Treating people equally requires a recognition of what is appropriate in the circumstances. A minimum right to equal treatment is often a legal right backed by legislation which is designed to address unfair discrimination among members of a particular group in society.

Diversity

Diversity means difference. It is about recognising individual as well as group differences, treating people as individuals, and placing positive value on diversity.

Diversity involves recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and embrace difference for the benefit of everyone.

Discrimination

Discrimination is treating individuals unfairly based on their membership – or perceived membership – in a certain group or category. It can take various forms: Direct, Indirect, Harassment, and Victimisation.



Types of Discrimination

Type	Definition	Examples
Bullying	Offensive, intimidating, malicious, threatening or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undermining e.g. making them look incompetent or stupid in meetings • Humiliating or injuring the individual • Excluding, or isolating, the individual from events or meetings
Harassment	Unwanted conduct which violates, intentionally or otherwise, a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual Harassment may be deliberate or unconscious, open or covert, an isolated incident or a series of repeated actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making fun of someone • Questioning ability due to a protected characteristic • Name calling, jokes, taunts, and use of offensive language • Inappropriate jokes and actions such as hiding / moving someone's impairment aid • Not providing training or development • Verbal or physical abuse or intimidation • Refusing to treat a person as their new gender when they transition • Outing a person without their consent or spreading rumours (this may also be a criminal offence) • Intrusive questioning • Excluding a person from conversation and activities • Refusing to work with someone or deliberately isolating them • Displaying offensive material or images including graffiti • Mocking or deriding an individual's beliefs

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotyping or making assumptions about lifestyles or interests • Unwelcome sexual advances, propositions and demands for sexual favours, and unsolicited/ unwanted gifts • Unwanted or derogatory comments about clothing or appearance • ‘Leering’ and suggestive gestures and remarks • Inappropriate physical contact
Victimisation	In equality legislation victimisation has a specific and precise meaning. It relates to when a person is treated badly because they have made a complaint of discrimination, helped someone who has made a claim, or have done anything else in connection with the Equality Legislation and are punished for it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion from work-related social events • Exclusion from conversations or activities during working hours • Being labelled as a troublemaker or ostracised, either at work and/or socially • Being denied an opportunity • Missing out on a training opportunity or promotion • Being disciplined or dismissed • Being refused a reference or by being given a poor reference



Strategic Actions

PEOPLE



- Engagement Surveys
- Inclusion statement in job adverts
- Consider where to advertise to get the most inclusive response
- Review the talent pool throughout the process
- Be open to making reasonable adjustments
- Wellbeing Champions

POLICIES



- Make leaders advocates
- Processes & training
- Create an anti-discrimination policy
- Promote and celebrate inclusive events such as Paralympic Games
- Bite size training

PROPERTY



- Foster a flexible hybrid working model
- Think about accessibility when designing procedure, product or property
- Provide a quiet reflection room which can be used as a prayer or meditation space
- Disability Confident Scheme Level 1 (UK)

PAY



- Gender Pay Gap review & reporting (country specific)
- Fair Progression decisions
- Fair Personal development opportunities

Common Protected Characteristics

Legislation across the countries in which we operate has many common themes in terms of protected characteristics. Below are examples of the most common ones.



Race:

The term race includes nationality, colour and national or ethnic origins. As with the other protected characteristics, if an employer treats a person unfavourably based on their race, it would be unlawful e.g. “I’m not recruiting them, they are not from around here”, “I don’t care if they are the best person for the job”.



Marriage or Civil Partnership:

Protects those who are married or in a civil partnership including same-sex partnerships. It may be considered discrimination, for example, if a married colleague is passed over for a promotion based on the employer’s belief that the role is more suited to an colleague who is single.



Sex:

Discriminating against a person based on their sex is unlawful. It applies to both men and women. This means that an employer cannot lawfully pay a man more than a woman for doing the same job if they are both equally qualified and experienced.



Gender reassignment:

Protects any person who proposes to, begins or has completed the process of changing their gender. This means they are protected even if they don’t undergo any medical procedure. An example of where an issue could arise is referring to someone as “she” and “her” when they are transitioning and self-identify as male.



Disability:

Under the Equality Legislation, a person is considered disabled if they suffer from any physical or mental impairment that causes a longterm and substantial effect on their capacity to perform normal daily activities. This would include tasks such as using public transport, reading a book or using a computer. An employer has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments



Sexual orientation:

Whether you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual, you are protected against discrimination based on sexual orientation e.g. handing out promotions to colleagues of one sexual orientation over another.



Age:

All age groups are protected under the Equality Legislation. Unlike the other protected characteristics, an employer can sometimes justify direct discrimination based on age.



Pregnancy & maternity:

During the period of a woman’s pregnancy and her statutory maternity leave, she is protected. This means that an employer cannot take pregnancy or maternity related issues into account when making employment decisions such as dismissals, redundancies. Breastfeeding is also now explicitly protected



Religion & Belief:

All religions are protected. People who have no religion or don’t follow any particular religious group are also protected. An example of this would be the traveller community.

For a belief or non-belief to be protected, it needs to satisfy certain criteria, such as it being a substantial aspect of behaviour and human life.

Other Protected Characteristics

Characteristics with flags assigned are protected under law in that country.

Political Beliefs:       (NI Only)

Protects an individual's opinion, manifested in speech or association, concerning the social, economic and governmental structure of society and its institutions.

Working Hours: 

Ensures part-time employees are not treated less favourably than a comparable full-time employee except where the treatment can be justified.

Contract: 

Ensures fixed-term workers are not treated less favourably than a comparable "permanent" employee except where the treatment can be justified.

Language:   

This protected characteristic is usually to ensure a certain culture is preserved, an example would be the three Sami languages spoken in Finland: Northern Sami, Inari Sami and Skolt Sami.

Name: 

Discrimination is often based on the name of the individual therefore discrimination based on family name has been added to the list of prohibited forms of discrimination types in certain countries.

Opinion:  

To protect an individual from being discriminated on because of a view or judgment formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.

Social background:  

The kind of family you come from and the kind of education you have had. It can also refer to such things as your social origins, your financial status, or the type of work experience that you have.

Trade union:   

Prevents discrimination against the colleagues who are member of a trade union to look after their interests at work by doing things like: negotiating agreements with employers on pay and conditions.

Physical characteristics:  

Protects against discrimination due to traits or features about your body. These are aspects that are visually apparent- hair, clothes, nose, or figure.

Fostering an EDI Culture

If you would like to see how inclusive you are then you can choose to complete our questionnaire below.

	Always (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)
I use correct names and pronouns, including 'they' and 'their'			
I use inclusive terms for groups such as 'folks' or 'people'			
I understand that one set of protected beliefs is no "better" than another			
I encourage colleagues to feel safe to share personal beliefs in a non-discriminatory way			
I clearly call out discriminatory behaviour as unacceptable			
I call out stereotypes when they arise and empower others to do the same			
I ensure my team have completed the relevant training module			
I deal with any accusations or cases of discriminatory behaviour quickly, sensitively and fairly			
I avoid making assumptions based upon appearances or prior perceptions of a group			
I raise awareness of mental health needs and other hidden disabilities in order to remove stereotypes and reduce stigma			
I take responsibility for developing a better understand and appreciation of the uniqueness of each group			
I ensure all groups are welcome to apply for roles/promotion			
I recruit fairly and equitably			
I encourage colleagues to share their ideas and be their true selves			
Total out of a maximum of 42			

Our Policy

Recruitment, Advertising and Selection

We will:

- Conduct the process to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant experience, abilities and qualifications.
- Consider equal opportunities at all stages of recruitment and selection.
- Ensure advertisements aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people and will not be confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants with a particular protected characteristic
- Avoid setting any unnecessary provisions or criteria which would exclude a higher proportion of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.
- Determine where having a particular protected characteristic is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, and apply that requirement to the job role and may specify this in the advertisement.
- Where necessary assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about any of the protected characteristics.

Training and Promotion

We will:

- Provide training to all colleagues to help them understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities and dignity at work and how to create a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment;
- Ensure promotions are not discriminatory and will check how the system is working in practice;
- Identify when colleagues who have a particular protected characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, and review the promotional system to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Employment Terms

We will

- Review periodically, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful direct or indirect discrimination because of one or more of the protected characteristics.
- Make reasonable adjustments to work provisions and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that disabled clients, colleagues or partners are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. They can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Colleagues who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.
- We will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment against our colleagues.

Our Policy

Clients, suppliers and other Third parties

We will

- Decide whether to accept instructions from any particular client, but any refusal to act will not be based upon any of the prohibited grounds;
- Take steps to meet the different needs of particular clients arising from its obligations under anti-discrimination legislation;
- Where necessary and where it is permitted by the relevant anti-discrimination legislation (for example, provisions relating to positive action or exemptions) we will seek to provide services which meet the specific needs and requests arising from a protected characteristic.



Reporting Complaints

All allegations and reports of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and promptly. If you wish to make a complaint of discrimination you should follow the grievance procedure. In the unlikely incident that you have already reported it in this way and the matter has not been dealt with then you can email speakup@ivcevidensia.com or report through our independent external speak up facility <https://ivcevidensia.integrityline.org/>

Serious breaches of this equality and diversity policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the colleague liable to summary dismissal. Colleagues should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Colleagues who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

We will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment against our colleagues.

Measurements & Monitoring

Recruitment & Retention

Description: Comparing the protected groups volumes/% at start and end of year

Tracking promotions awarded to individuals from protected groups compared with promotions awarded to the general workforce

Development

Description: Tracking lateral moves, appointments to acting roles, training and other learning and development participation, and other stretch assignment opportunities by protected groups versus the general workforce

Pay and benefits

Description: Compare financial and non-financial rewards earned by individuals from protected groups to financial and non-financial rewards earned by the general workforce

Colleague engagement

Description: Compare colleague engagement scores for individuals from protected groups with scores for the rest of the workforce



Terms That Will Help Us Be More Inclusive

TRANSITIONING

The process of a person beginning to live as another gender.

PRONOUNS

The words we use to describe ourselves or others - 'he', 'she' or 'they'. For a non-binary or gender neutral person you should use the word 'they' in the place of 'he' or 'she'.

CONSCIOUS BIAS

Openly discriminatory discussion and actions can still take place even within companies that consider themselves to be progressive, and this needs to be called out and challenged.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Hiring managers can have great intentions of offering equal opportunities for all job candidates and still make decisions based on unconscious bias. They might think that they are making objective decisions, but their brain may be pushing them towards specific outcomes, derived from societal conditioning.

AFFINITY BIAS

This is another unconscious tendency, where hiring managers may have something in common with a candidate and rank them above others because of this.

SIMILARITY BIAS

Can lead hiring managers and recruiters to prefer people with similar qualities to themselves. We are naturally drawn to people like ourselves, and studies show that hiring managers will often select candidates that they can see themselves in.

CONTRAST BIAS

Includes making assumptions about candidates based on the directly previous applicant. This would involve a hiring manager sorting through a bunch of CVs, comparing each one directly to the last.

INTENTIONAL BIAS

Takes place when the hiring manager actively and consciously discriminates against a certain group.

VIRTUE SIGNALLING

The action of publicly expressing opinions that are intended to demonstrate good character towards a particular issue. For example, someone could share a post on social media in which they speak out against an issue that doesn't affect them personally, but this is done to protect or promote their own reputation as opposed to creating real change for the affected group.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Describe how individual characteristics like race, gender and sexuality can overlap or 'intersect' within the one individual e.g. you might have a female colleague who is also physically disabled.

ONLYNESS

Describes a state (and a feeling) of being the only one of your identity in a certain space. E.g "being the only one on a team or in a meeting with their given gender identity, sexual orientation, or race."

TOKENISM

Tokenism and onliness can work hand-inhand. Tokenism is the practice of doing something (such as hiring a person who belongs to a minority group) only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly.

BELONGING

For all colleagues to feel a sense of belonging at work is arguably the ultimate goal of diversity and inclusion.

AVOID MICROAGGRESSIONS

Statement, action or comment which is indirectly, subtly or unintentionally discriminatory against members of a marginalised group.

CANCEL CULTURE

Businesses or individuals are rejected in social circles due to intentional or unintentional actions or comments. Cancel culture can have both good and bad outcomes. In some circumstances it can provide much-needed criticism of powerful bodies and individuals. In other circumstances it can lead to a mob mentality that heaps hate onto people who are not ill-intentioned.

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer and others who identify as asexual, pansexual, intersexed, agender, genderqueer etc.

BIPOC

Black, Indigenous & People of Colour the ultimate goal of diversity and inclusion.



Roles & Responsibilities



The Board, Chief Executive and Executive Committee are responsible for:

- Providing leadership on the equality and diversity strategy and policy, acting as overall champions to drive the values;
- Communicating the strategy and policy, internally and externally;
- Ensuring appropriate actions are taken if the policy is breached.



All colleagues are responsible for:

- Implementing the policy as part of their day-to day work;
- Completing the required training and demonstrating the values;
- Reporting any inequality or discrimination concerns.



Human Resources are responsible for:

- Developing employment policy and strategy on equality, diversity and dignity at work;
- Providing guidance to managers and colleagues;
- Supporting managers in investigating issues relating to potential discriminations;
- Monitoring employment policies and practices;
- Championing the issues, internally and externally;
- Facilitating training and development initiatives on equality and diversity, both at corporate and directorate level.



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