

Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan for SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)

Background

Horizon Europe introduced the requirement for organisations responding to calls for applications to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality through the development and publication of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP). This document demonstrates SRUCs commitment to the GEP building blocks defined by the Horizon Europe programme namely:

- Be a public document and signed by the top management and disseminated within the institution. It should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them.
- Have dedicated resources for the design, implementation, and monitoring of GEPs. This may include funding for specific positions such as Equality Officers or Gender Equality Teams as well as earmarked working time for academic, management and administrative staff.
- Include arrangements for data collection and monitoring. The GEPs must be evidence-based and founded on sex or gender-disaggregated baseline data collected across all staff categories
- Be supported by training and capacity-building, such as developing gender competence and tackling unconscious gender bias among staff, leaders and decision-makers, as well as by establishing working groups dedicated to specific topics, and raising awareness through workshops and communication activities.

SRUC are at a point where there are several documents and initiatives that demonstrates these building blocks primarily:

- Equality Outcomes Document
- Equal Pay Statements
- Athena Swan submission and action plan
- Emily Test commitment

The following document summarises the range of processes in place at SRUC and I confirm that we, as an institution, are fully committed to enacting and enhancing equality processes and outcomes in SRUC.

J Newbold

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Director SRUC March
2022

SRUC Gender Equality Plan

Our [Strategic Plan 2018-22](#) articulates how the work undertaken by SRUC links to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs; now integrated within the Scottish Government's Purpose and revised National Performance Framework), specifying both Good Health and Wellbeing and Gender Equality. These UNSDGs will underpin our approach and activities providing a basis for our wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda as we move forward into the next stage of SRUC's development and growth.

Underpinning our strategic vision are our Values (RISE) :

- **Respect** everyone's contribution – by ensuring that they have the opportunity to participate and be heard
- **Innovate** for success – by considering the different skills, knowledge and experience that each individual colleague or student can bring
- **Support** each other – by implementing the policies and practices that will develop the supportive culture we aspire to and by calling out those who do not
- **Excel** in everything we do – by being a strong advocate for inclusion and giving it due consideration in our day-to-day activity thereby supporting SRUC to meet its objectives in this respect

SRUC is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements within it, as well as the Scotland specific requirements created by secondary legislation (Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012). As an HEI and public body SRUC also needs to meet various obligations, particularly the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2017) and the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 which address gender balance in leadership and decision- making. Our most recent publications are :

- [Gender Pay Gap Report 2021](#)
- [Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021 - 2025](#)

The latter of these includes work around gender equality in recruitment and career progression. The creation and use of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process is an obligation under the PSED requirements. SRUC has assessments in place for employment policies and has an agreed process for the development of these with the Trade Unions which embeds the completion of an EIA into this process.

We have worked to implement our [Gender Action Plan 2017 – 21](#) which includes actions to improve work-life balance and highlight the importance of a supportive organisational culture. As a tangible signal of our efforts to embed gender equality, SRUC has committed to the principles of the Athena Swan Charter and are actively reviewing our data and generating an action plan to address identified issues. The implementation of the action plan will build on the pre-existing Gender Action Plan and contribute to the achievement of our Equality Outcomes 2021 - 25.

We are also aware of our role in raising awareness of and addressing inequality in

our sphere of operation and influence and have contributed to national consultation exercises and the development of new initiatives such as the Emily Test Charter which aims to tackle gender-based violence.

SRUC promotes adherence to the RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct and the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity among our researchers. Our Athena Swan Charter application and action plan include actions to build on the principles outlined in these documents to promote integration of the gender dimension into our research planning and processes.

Embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum means the creation of learning, teaching and assessment environments and experiences that proactively eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations in a manner that values, preserves and responds to diversity. By developing inclusive and diversity inclusive curricula, it supports staff and students to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attributes and attitudes about and towards equality, diversity and cultural difference that enable them to work effectively in a global and interconnected world.

As a tertiary organisation, our approach to inclusivity is important: to support students to be able to join us at various levels, to progress through and across our programmes, and to be successful, we must ensure that our curricula are enabling rather than excluding. To become an enterprise university focused on the natural economy, we also need to equip our students with the ability to work across disciplines, nations and cultures to be able to tackle wicked global problems, which require an interdisciplinary, global citizenship (and sustainable development) mindset. Our approach to the embedding of equality and diversity in the curriculum is based on that advocated by Advance HE.

We also have a programme of activity taking place both internally and externally relating to marking months/weeks and days of recognition relating to protected characteristics and health and wellbeing more generally. This includes the International Day of Women and Girls in Science and International Women's Day. In order to allow the inclusion of actions identified through our Athena Swan Charter application, our intention is to develop a revised, single document Gender Equality Plan following our submission to the Charter (anticipated to be mid-2022). In the meantime we are confident that our activity to support gender equality aligns with the Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan (GEP) requirements as follows:

Be a public document:

The documents linked through this statement are also available on our website and our Athena Swan application will be added once available.

Have dedicated resources:

We have created and appointed to a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead position. In addition our Athena Swan application and action plan process has

a committed Self Assessment Team (SAT). Our workload allocation model for academic staff includes a code to allow SAT members, and other colleagues, to record time dedicated to gender equality activity.

Include arrangements for data collection and monitoring:

Our Athena Swan application includes detailed data relating to gender upon which the related action plan is developed to include SMART objectives. Our PSED reports includes information on staff numbers and pay gaps broken down by gender. Following a drive to encourage employees to update their personal equality information at the start of each calendar year the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee reviews the reports created from this equality data, including gender information, on an annual basis.

Be supported by training and capacity-building:

We have in place a structure of equality related training including unconscious bias and equality impact assessments which begins in the induction process and is built upon in relation to specific responsibilities e.g. unconscious bias training for those undertaking recruitment, student discipline and for decision makers for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment exercise. Other self-learning modules are available for employees to access at any time and training and development is discussed with line managers through our Making Performance Matter process. We also involve employees in the development of processes and policies thereby improving knowledge e.g. our Equality Strategy consultation exercise in 2021/22.