Diversity, Access and Inclusivity Best Practice

June 2021

The Royal Society of Chemistry Environmental Chemistry Group

Statement

The **Environmental Chemistry Group** is a voluntary member-led interest group of the **Royal Society of Chemistry**. Our focus is the promotion of interests and expertise of members across all areas of environmental chemistry, including water, soil and atmospheric, natural, anthropogenic, biogenic or geochemical territories, and between peoples of all demographics, including all ethnicities, cultures, genders, sexualities, geographies, abilities, and career stages.

We are dedicated to supporting and increasing inclusion, access and diversity in environmental chemistry. We believe that for the chemical sciences to prosper, they must attract, develop and retain a diverse range of talented people.

This statement and the following strategy are based upon those of the **Royal Society of Chemistry**:

https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/22-new-perspectives/talent/inclusion-and-diversity/strategy/rsc-inclusion-diversity-strategy-2025.pdf

Approach

The remit of the **Environmental Chemistry Group** involves the organisation and delivery of scientific meetings, outreach, and the publication of scientific texts in our biannual *Bulletin*. We offer bursaries and support for some events, such as supporting access for early career researchers and retired members. We also represent expertise on committees and recognise the achievements of those in the field of environmental chemistry, such as by the award of our annual Distinguished Guest Lecture medal. As such, our efforts are directed towards:

- Promoting **inclusive language**, such as avoidance of ableist terms, and sensitivity towards use of pronouns
- Working from a **diverse committee** of individuals and backgrounds
- Creating events and publishing works that **showcase and support a diverse community** of speakers and authors

Some of the specific steps we are integrating into our practice are summarised in the following two Royal Society of Chemistry quick guides.

Quick guide to inclusive communications

Format

Will anyone be excluded by the material chosen?

Consider the needs of your audience, remembering that their needs may stem from characteristics that you cannot see or identify with. For example, consider those with visual impairments when designing promotional materials.

Design your material to be as legible as possible. Consider web-publication, which allows users to alter font, colour and contrast to suit their individual needs. Write in plain concise language. If printed material is chosen then use matt rather than glossy paper and use dark text on a light background. Consider alternative channels e.g. Braille, radio.

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Typeface

Is the typeface easily readable for all users?

Use a plain evenly spaced sans serif font e.g. Arial, Verdana or Tahoma. Use 12– 14pt font, or use 16pt font for anyone with visual impairment. Avoid underlining or italics, instead use bold. Avoid using block capitals. Avoid using both green and red/pink, these colours may be more difficult to distinguish for anyone with a visual colour impairment.

Images

Are the images you have chosen appropriate?

Choose images carefully to ensure that they are easily understood and support the text. Consider what the image may suggest to a wide audience; avoid unintended consequences and perpetuating negative stereotypes through images.

Language

Is the language inclusive? Could it be misinterpreted?

Ensure language is free from words or phrases that may reflect discriminatory, prejudiced or stereotyped views. Ensure that individuals or groups will not feel excluded by the language used. Avoid patronising expressions. Use alternatives for generic pronouns e.g. 'the committee member' rather than 'he', 'humanity' or 'people' rather than 'mankind' and 'chair' instead of 'chairman'.

Quick guide to running an inclusive event

Organising committee

- Use a diverse team of individuals for the organisation of an event in order to provide balanced views and reduce the risk of unconscious bias
- Take time in decision making

Venue

- Ensure the venue has appropriate access requirements for all
- Provide maps in advance
- Provide large text resources (consider font, format) if appropriate
- Reserve the most accessible seats for those with access requirements
- Consider the corridor width for those with access requirements (crutches, canes, wheelchairs etc)
- Ensure that bathroom facilities are accessible for all (and consider distance to these especially for those with access requirements)
- Consider the length of time participants might be required to stand, and provide seating for those who cannot stand for long periods

- Events must have efficient hearing loop access
- Ensure that microphones are available
- Encourage session chairs to clearly repeat questions from audience members
- Consider use of a sign-language interpreter or visualising speech if required
- Provide inclusive catering (considering dietary requirements, provision of alcohol, religious observances)
- Consider making the event remotely accessible (e.g. live streaming, or recording)
- Collect feedback on the inclusivity of your event venue

Registration

- Consider inclusion and diversity in any language or imagery used
- Provide the text of the Royal Society of Chemistry code of conduct and a tick box that signals the registrant agrees to abide by it
- Enforce a zero tolerance approach to harassment
- Provide information on accessibility services offered
- Request information on any additional accessibility needs
- Use an open text box for dietary requirements (collect dietary and access requirements separately)
- If there will be a photographer, include information and how to opt out
- Consider inclusion in all marketing materials – use appropriate language and images, being careful not to perpetuate negative stereotypes

Participants

- Collect diversity monitoring data on participants, session chairs and speakers
- Consider advertisement (channels, location, formats) of event
- Consider your current criteria for shortlisting speakers and session chairs – suggest more potential speakers/session chairs from underrepresented groups
- Change the wording on speaker/session chair invitations to be more inclusive – avoid requesting a speaker demonstrates 'excellence in the field', instead consider their valuable experience and skills
- Actively select diverse speakers/session chairs
- Ensure all participants are aware of the Royal Society of Chemistry's position on and commitment to inclusion and diversity and our code of conduct
- All Royal Society of Chemistry events must consider inclusion and diversity
- Increase awareness of the importance of role models at events
- Provide session chairs with methods to improve diversity at question times e.g. wait an extra minute until everyone wishing to ask a question expresses their intent, don't ask overrepresented groups first
- Encourage session chairs to collect informal monitoring data on who asks questions at question time
- Collect feedback from participants on the inclusivity of the event

Review

- Use equality monitoring data and feedback to review the event and improve future practice