



RCSI

Equal Opportunities Policy

Purpose

The Employment Equality Act 2004 outlaws discrimination, both direct and indirect, on any of the nine discriminatory grounds outlined within this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with the respective legislation, to inform staff of the college's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all RCSI staff and potential staff on the basis of appropriate merits, qualifications, abilities and potential of individuals.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and potential staff of RCSI.

Policy Statement

The Employment Equality Act 2004 places heavy responsibilities on employers to prohibit direct, discrimination by association, indirect discrimination and victimisation in employment on any of the following grounds:

- Gender
- Civil Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of a Traveller Community

- **Socio-economic Status**

The terms of the legislation apply to employers in the public and private sectors and to employment agencies, self-employed individuals, vocational training bodies, trade unions and professional bodies and to the publication of advertisements. The Act allows an employer to put in place positive action measures to remove existing inequalities, which affect women's opportunities in access to employment, vocational training and promotion.

Under the terms of the legislation unlawful discrimination is defined as either **direct** or **discrimination by association** or **indirect** or it may take the form of **victimisation**.

- **Direct Discrimination** applies where you are less favourably treated than any other person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on one of the nine grounds which
 1. exists
 2. existed but no longer exists
 3. may exist in the future
 4. is imputed to the person concerned
- **Discrimination by Association** means that you cannot be treated less favourably as a result of your association with someone where similar treatment of that other person would be discrimination on one of the nine grounds
- **Indirect Discrimination** arises where an unjustifiable or unessential requirement or condition is applied but which has a disproportionate adverse effect on a particular group or class of persons who are protected under the legislation. There need not be any intention to discriminate.
- **Victimisation** is any form of retaliation by an employer or arising from circumstances where a person takes any action to pursue their rights, due to
 1. Making a complaint of discrimination
 2. Taking proceedings
 3. Having represented or supported a complainant
 4. Having their work compared in an equality case
 5. Being a witness to a case
 6. Opposed by lawful means a discriminatory act
 7. Giving notice of intention to do any of the above

Procedure

Declaration of Commitment by Management

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland is committed, as an equal opportunity employer, to implement equal opportunities in all its employment policies, practices and procedures. To this end it will ensure that the principles of employment equality are applied to recruitment, promotion, training, career development and to all terms and conditions of employment.

Our objective is to ensure that no job applicant or staff member receives less favourable treatment, directly or indirectly, on any of the grounds set out in the Employment Equality Act, 2004 as outlined above.

We will ensure that management at all levels actively support, encourage and implement equality in the workplace. We will implement a positive and continuing programme of action to make this policy fully effective. All procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are appointed, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. All staff members will have equal opportunity to show ability and progress within RCSI.

Recruitment and Selection

In selecting applicants for posts within RCSI, we will observe the principles of equity and constitutional justice and will avoid unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, age, social background or other irrelevant considerations. In implementing this policy, RCSI will seek to eliminate barriers to participation and to promote the equality of opportunity. In support of the above commitment, please see the corresponding Recruitment & Selection Policy.

The recruitment and selection process will be constantly monitored to ensure the elimination of any possibly discriminatory aspects. A well thought out selection process can prove an effective tool to an organisation genuinely pursuing equality of opportunity. The following policy will therefore apply:

1. Recruitment positions in RCSI are open to all suitably qualified candidates subject to educational and experience criterion relevant to each specific post being met.
2. RCSI's selection process will provide equal access at all stages to all candidates. A record of all decisions made throughout the selection process will be retained for at least 12 months after the appointments have been made.
3. RCSI will prepare written job specifications based on the requirements of the job at the time. Requirements and qualifications considered essential will relate strictly to the proper performance of the job.
4. Advertisements will contain nothing of a discriminatory nature and will encourage applications from the broadest possible base. This does not preclude local advertising of positions where appropriate.
5. All advertisements will contain a positive statement of RCSI's commitment to its equal opportunities policy.

6. Selection tests, where used will relate only to the genuine requirements of the job and will be designed in a way that affords all candidates an equal opportunity for success.
7. Short listing will be carried out by matching details of all applicants to the job specification. To guard against the possibility of bias more than one person will be involved in this procedure if at all possible.
8. All selection interviews will be conducted impartially. Interviewers will not make assumptions about the suitability of candidates for certain types of work based on gender, marital status or any other personal factor not relevant to the requirements of the job.
9. To minimise the possibility of bias, interview boards if at all possible will include members of both sexes.
10. Questions at interviews will be directed towards assessing the suitability of candidates for the job in question. Where it is essential to assess whether personal circumstances will affect performance of the job, relevant questions will be asked equally of all applicants and the answers evaluated on the same basis for all.

Training

RCSI is committed to the provision of excellence in its service. It is an integral part of this commitment that all staff members are given equal access to appropriate training. Therefore:

- Training will be available equally to all relevant staff with no category excluded.
- Selection for training will be made without regard to sex, (this will not preclude RCSI from selecting a mixture of males and females to attend particular courses), marital status or any other non-relevant factor.

Promotion

RCSI is committed to providing a promotion system which gives equal access to all suitably qualified staff.

- RCSI's promotion practices will not discriminate on grounds of sex, marital status or any other factors set out in the Employment Equality Act, 2004.
- Management will ensure that all staff are aware of career/promotional opportunities.
- Promotion will be determined solely from objective criteria based on the person's performance and ability to do the job

Career Development

- Employees will be informed of, and encouraged, to pursue personal and career development opportunities open to them without assumptions being made about their mobility or possible length of future service

Working Arrangements

Efforts will be made to enable staff to combine their work and family responsibilities. Leave of Absence, Parental Leave and Job Sharing have a significant contribution to make in this respect.

Subject to the overall needs and requirements of RCSI, access to such schemes shall be available equally to all staff.

Language and Corporate Image

RCSI will demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities by using non-discriminatory, non-sexist language.

Your responsibility as an RCSI staff member

Each member of staff has a responsibility as set out in this policy and in legislation to avoid unfair discrimination against individuals or particular groups.

In particular, members of staff –

- Should promote equal opportunities, should recognise and respect the rights, and contribute to the development of a harmonious environment for colleagues.
- Cooperate with any measures introduced by RCSI to promote equal opportunities for staff.
- Should not prevail upon management or colleagues to practice unfair discrimination or to act in a way which is contrary to the spirit of this policy.

Getting Further Help

The Human Resources department is available to support any member of staff in understanding or implementing the content of this policy and procedure.

Policy Review

The Human Resources Department will ensure that this policy will be monitored and kept under review.