

RCNDE EDI Policy

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Background

The UK Research Centre in Non-Destructive Evaluation (RCNDE, ‘the Centre’)¹ values diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, supports equality, and strives to be an inclusive environment where everyone can feel appreciated for their contributions. RCNDE recognises that by enshrining Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles in policy and encouraging their application in all spheres of its activity it can more effectively achieve its aims and meet the needs of its community.

At the same time, both the RCNDE membership² and the Management Team (‘MT’)³ acknowledge that further work is required to reach these goals. The EDI policy arises out of a shared desire to address areas where improvements are necessary and an ambition to embed EDI at the heart of RCNDE’s work. These desires were encapsulated in the 2023-2028 Strategic Delivery Plan: “Diversity in people and diversity in ideas are key to RCNDE’s future success and RCNDE will champion an open, inclusive and diverse environment that continues delivering world-class research and delivering industrial benefit to its members and society. The RCNDE MT will work on an EDI policy that provides a systemic approach for developing an inclusive culture for RCNDE as well as inclusive approaches to employment policies and practices of the MT.”

Purpose of this policy

- a. The policy sets out a concrete set of principles and provides a roadmap to help us achieve critical goals:
 - i. Encourage and promote a diverse membership that represents the community we serve.

¹ For a definition of RCNDE for the purposes of this policy, and for an outline of its responsibilities with regards to it, please refer to [Appendix B](#) in this document.

² RCNDE membership here encompasses all categories of membership: Academic Member, Tier 1 Industrial Member (previously known as Full Industrial), Tier 2 Industrial Member, and Associate Member.

³ For a definition of the RCNDE Management Team for the purposes of this policy, and for an outline of its responsibilities with regards to it, please refer to [Appendix B](#) in this document.

- ii. Remove barriers to membership, participation in our full range of activities, assumption of leadership/management roles, and access to financial, networking, and other opportunities offered by RCNDE.
- iii. Enable underrepresented people/groups to benefit from our investments in cutting-edge research, academia-industry collaboration, and doctoral schemes.
- iv. Deliver benefit to our industrial communities by bringing together diverse backgrounds, talents, and perspectives to develop novel solutions and open up new research directions.
- b. The EDI policy outlines a clear framework of duties, responsibilities, and aims shared among RCNDE's constitutive organisations, groups, and individuals. The resulting transparency with regards to RCNDE's values and commitments also ensures there is accountability, and provides the procedures for responding to complaints and/or breaches of the policy.
- c. The EDI policy contributes to the delivery of some of RCNDE's strategic goals:
 - i. Goal 3: Support talent.
To identify and nurture talent, RCNDE must embrace diversity, actively combat discrimination in all forms, and create an environment where people can thrive despite their differences.
 - ii. Goal 4: Strategic leadership and influencing the landscape.
To remain a leader in NDE and influence developments, RCNDE must acknowledge the significance of EDI in the workplace and in the wider society and demonstrate how EDI can be incorporated in daily practice and decision-making.
- d. By putting in place an EDI policy, RCNDE aligns itself with other comparable organisations and remains attuned to societal changes and challenges that impact its work.

Who this policy applies to

Except where the policy mentions specific groups or roles within the Centre (e.g. MT, Board, Director, etc.), the policy applies to the entire RCNDE community where members of this community are attending or participating in RCNDE meetings and events, are engaged in Centre processes and procedures (e.g. membership endorsement, applying for funding, funding decisions etc.), or are representing RCNDE (e.g. in a conference or networking event). The RCNDE community comprises the following: Members and the individuals representing them, the MT, the Management Board ('Board'), and the NDEvR Board of Directors ('NDEvR Board').⁴

Statement of policy

- a. RCNDE acknowledges the value of diversity in its membership and partners, actively works to achieve equality of opportunity and remove barriers to participation in its activities, and cultivates an inclusive environment where all individuals are respected, their contributions celebrated, and their differences treated as a source of strength.
- b. For the purposes of this policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) includes the characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010:
 - i. disability (physical or hidden)
 - ii. gender reassignment
 - iii. marriage or civil partnership status

⁴ For definitions and responsibilities with regards to this policy, please refer to [Appendix B](#) in this document.

- iv. race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
 - v. religion or belief
 - vi. sex
 - vii. sexual orientation
 - viii. pregnancy and maternity
- It also includes other barriers to opportunity not acknowledged under the Equality Act, such as class, dialect, education, caring responsibilities, and other forms of socio-economic exclusion.
- c. RCNDE will not discriminate via direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, or victimisation against any current and potential members, collaborators, NDEVR employees, or other stakeholders on account of any of the characteristics listed in 4.b.⁵
 - d. RCNDE will promote equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - e. EDI is embedded in RCNDE's Strategy, and forms part of all decision-making processes.
 - f. RCNDE will challenge discriminatory behaviour and/or acts in breach of this policy if encountered in its events, meetings, or during the course of discharging its processes and procedures. Such incidents will be managed in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 5.
 - g. Any complaints about behaviour in RCNDE events/activities that contradicts this policy will be dealt sensitively, in a timely manner, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 5.
 - h. The RCNDE MT undertake EDI training appropriate to the performance of their duties, and may arrange for such training to be provided to other roles within RCNDE with key EDI duties (e.g. Board Industry Chair and Academic Chair). This is to ensure that these role-holders understand the importance of EDI, are able to implement the policy, and remain up to date with developments and legislation changes.
 - i. The RCNDE Management Board holds ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the EDI policy and for compliance with it. It will also approve or discard any proposed changes to the policy and any action recommendations made by the MT that have arisen from reviewing performance data.

Process for dealing with complaints and breaches of the policy

- a. RCNDE takes the implementation of the EDI policy seriously, and will take action to address breaches and complaints. While the Centre recognises that formal action (e.g. temporary ban from RCNDE events) may occasionally be necessary to ensure RCNDE provides a welcoming and respectful environment, the Centre will always seek first an informal resolution.
- b. Where a breach has occurred, RCNDE will address the discriminatory behaviour with the individual(s) concerned in a private meeting with the RCNDE Director and a small panel of Board members convened by the Director. In the event that the RCNDE Director has committed the breach, or is the subject of the complaint, their duties will be executed by the Industry Chair of the Board or the Academic Chair of the Board. The aim of the meeting is to understand the reason for the incident and ensure it will not be repeated. It also aims to reinstate good relations and provide a space for a calm discussion.
- c. If an individual refuses to acknowledge they have displayed behaviour that breaches this policy, or if they repeatedly commit acts that contravene the policy, the RCNDE Director will refer their case to the RCNDE Board, with the expectation that the members involved will use good faith to resolve the issue. Any members of the Board who have a personal relationship (e.g.

⁵ See the [Equality Act 2010](#) for a definition of each of these forms of prohibited conduct.

- marriage/partnership, family relation, etc.), are currently working on a project with, or belong to the same organisation as the individual mentioned above will not participate in this part of the conflict resolution process. A Board member may also be exempted from the conflict resolution process if two or more other Board members raise concerns about their ability to act impartially on that specific occasion.
- d. If attempts to resolve the situation with the involvement of the RCNDE Board fail, then the RCNDE Board and MT will work together to ensure the procedure outlined in clause 17⁶ of the RCNDE Collaboration Agreement ('the Agreement') is followed.
 - e. If the matter is not settled by recourse to the process outlined in clause 17 of the Agreement, the RCNDE MT and Board will implement clauses 17.1 and 17.2. In the interim, the RCNDE Board may take one or more of the following actions:
 - i. Temporarily ban the individual(s) from attending RCNDE meetings and events.
 - ii. Temporarily remove access to funding and/or other opportunities provided by RCNDE from the organisation to which the individual belongs.
 - iii. Temporarily prevent the individual and/or the organisation they represent from participating in decision-making processes.
 - f. Subsequent to the matter being resolved following the procedures outlined in clauses 17.1-17.3 in the Agreement, any of the actions outlined above (5.e.i-iii) will, if implemented, be reviewed in line with the outcome and an appropriate decision will be taken as to whether they should be reversed.
 - g. The individual who has breached the policy or is the subject of the complaint will not, for the purposes of the processes outlined in 5.c.-f., be able to act in their capacity as Board member or MT member, should they also hold any of these roles.

Performance monitoring and policy review

- a. Performance will be monitored annually through the collection and presentation of the following data in a report put together by the RCNDE MT:
 - i. Details of any policy breaches that have occurred since the last report, including number, severity, and outcomes. The names of the individual(s) involved will not be disclosed, and every effort will be made to avoid disclosing identifying information.
 - ii. Diversity⁷ in leadership roles (including, but not limited to, positions in the RCNDE MT and the NDEvR Board of Directors).
 - iii. Diversity in proposals submitted in response to RCNDE calls, analysed by type of call, and rates of success for candidates belonging to different groups.
 - iv. Diversity in membership composition.⁸
 - v. Composition attendees at RCNDE-organised events⁹.
 - vi. Comparison of the data above (i-v) with relevant data from previous years (where this data is available).
 - vii. Any feedback received by RCNDE members on the EDI aspect of any of the Centre's activities.
 - viii. Any feedback provided by members or the RCNDE MT regarding EDI and the policy's implementation or effectiveness.

⁶ For the full text, please consult the RCNDE Collaboration Agreement; clause 17 is also available as [Appendix C](#) in this document.

⁷ 'Diversity' here and in the rest of paragraph 6 refers to the full range of protected characteristics, as well as any additional factors of socio-economic exclusion identified.

⁸ For the purposes of the report, 'membership' consists of the member companies' representatives.

- b. The RCNDE MT will submit the report to the NDEvR Board of Directors for advice and feedback. The MT will subsequently present it at the next RCNDE Board meeting.
- c. Due to the nature of RCNDE's composition, it is not possible to set concrete targets for increasing diversity across certain areas (e.g. membership) and implement specific measures in case these targets are not met. Nevertheless, if the data review reveals a stagnation or decrease in levels of diversity, the recurrence of certain complaints received via feedback, or an increase or repetition of breaches of the policy, the RCNDE MT will review the EDI policy, action plan, and any guidelines that have arisen from these to identify any changes that could address the issues revealed by the data in the report.
- d. The policy will be reviewed annually by the RCNDE Centre Manager or Administrator (or other appropriate MT member), who will put forward a recommendation to retain the policy as is, or make a number of specific changes. The recommendations will be accompanied by a brief explanation of the rationale behind them and the expected outcome, and will in the first instance be brought to the NDEvR Board of Directors for advice and feedback.
 - i. If modified, the policy and the recommended changes will subsequently be brought to the RCNDE Board for approval.
 - ii. Should there be disagreement between the RCNDE MT and the NDEvR Board of Directors as to whether changes should occur, the matter will be referred to the RCNDE Board for a final decision.
- e. The RCNDE MT will make their recommendation to retain or change the policy on the basis of the following considerations:
 - i. Findings of the annual report.
 - ii. Changes in legislation.
 - iii. Significant societal changes/changes in attitudes that are having an impact on professional environments.
 - iv. Changes internal to RCNDE (e.g. change in other policies, procedures, membership model, funding model, etc.).
- f. Where necessary, the policy can be reviewed or amended ad hoc (e.g. in case of change in legislation). The same process will be followed as described in 6.d above.

Appendix A: Action plan for the EDI policy implementation

To create the conditions necessary for ongoing compliance with the EDI policy, and to start its implementation, the RCNDE MT (unless another group/role is specified) proposes to take the following actions:

Seek to understand, learn, and improve:

- a. Perform an evidence-gathering exercise to better understand the people that make up RCNDE's membership and partners and their particular needs. Providing that information will be voluntary, and the relevant data will be collected, handled, and stored in accordance with GDPR regulation.
- b. Incorporate equality-and-diversity-monitoring data-gathering processes in its membership agreements, funding calls, and event registration to ensure accurate monitoring. Providing that information will be voluntary, and the relevant data will be collected, handled, and stored in accordance with GDPR regulation.
- c. Undertake research on and implement best practice in putting together the questions that will be used to gather data on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- d. Undertake training on identifying and addressing unconscious bias and microaggressions, and on how to embed EDI in research organisations.

- e. Create a feedback form to be circulated after every major event or activity (e.g. Annual meetings, RCNDE funding applications, etc.) to understand what obstacles members may be facing and how to improve our processes.
- f. Investigate the possibility of adding a feedback form on the public side of the RCNDE website, to be used by those who wish to raise issues and concerns without fear of repercussions. The data from these forms will be anonymised by the Centre Administrator or Centre Manager before being viewed by the Director and Deputy Director, and will only be shared with other roles within RCNDE on a need-to-know basis, for instance to support a case made to the Board for changing an existing procedure.

Accessibility and inclusion:

- a. Create and adhere to an accessibility guide that will inform all RCNDE communications.
- b. Amend RCNDE processes to ensure that applications for funding and/or roles within RCNDE will have a generous timeframe, will be communicated in compliance with the accessibility guide, and will be accompanied by clear and easy to follow guidance and/or templates.
- c. Ensure that planning of all RCNDE meetings, events, and communications enable participation from as wide a range of the Centre’s membership as possible. Specifically:
 - i. Create a checklist of requirements that events venues must meet (lift, wheelchair accessible, hearing loop, options for seating close to/far from screen, quiet space available, availability of accessible toilets etc.)
 - ii. Consider potential obstacles to participation if events take place on specific dates (e.g. school break, major religious celebrations, academic calendar etc.) and seek to mitigate them where possible
 - iii. Consider and seek to mitigate them where possible the impact of participation costs such as travel, accommodation, etc.
- d. Explore with the designer of the RCNDE website the option to make available an accessible version of it.
- e. Ensure all future RCNDE publicity material (e.g. presentations, posters, etc.) adheres to accessibility guidelines, or is accompanied by accessible versions
- f. Adopt guidance issued by relevant advocacy groups with relation to the language appropriate to refer to aspects of people’s identities, especially with regard to protected characteristics.

Diversity and representation:

- a. When considering invited speakers and presenters for our events, endeavour to identify and prioritise relevant people from underrepresented groups.
- b. Revise and update current methods for communicating funding or other opportunities within RCNDE to include avenues and forums that will enable the Centre to reach as wide a variety of eligible candidates as possible. Directly reach out to those in the RCNDE community who belong to underrepresented groups to encourage them to apply.
- c. Update the Centre’s recruitment and decision-making strategies to ensure the Board considers not only the overall suitability of an organisation for membership, but also their EDI credentials.

Appendix B: Matrix of roles and responsibilities with regards to the EDI policy

Body/role:	Falls under:	Definition:	Responsibilities with regards to the EDI policy:
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UK Research Centre in Non-Destructive Evaluation (RCNDE, 'the Centre')	n/a	Comprises the RCNDE Management Team members, the NDEvR Board of Directors, the RCNDE Management Board, and representatives of RCNDE member organisations (Tier 1 Industrial, Tier 2 Industrial, Associate, and Academic) when they are engaged in RCNDE activities (e.g. attendance at meetings and events, voting, etc.), or representing RCNDE.	Adhering to the EDI policy statement (Section 3), except where a sub-group within RCNDE is specified.
RCNDE Management Team ('RCNDE MT', 'MT')	RCNDE	Director, Deputy Director, Industry Director, Technology Director, Academic Director, Centre Manager, Centre Administrator. (Please also refer to the definition in Appendix 1 of the Full Membership Agreement).	In addition to duties arising from being part of RCNDE, the RCNDE MT are also responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Action Plan (Appendix A). • Collecting the data for and putting together the annual performance and monitoring report. Submitting the report to the NDEvR Directors, acting on feedback, and presenting to the Board. • Working with the RCNDE Board to implement clause 17 and sub-clauses 17.1, 17.2, and 17.3 of the RCNDE Collaboration Agreement as needed to resolve situations arising from complaints or breaches of the EDI policy that cannot be resolved informally (see Section 5).
RCNDE Director	RCNDE Management Team	The Centre is run by a Director, who is appointed by the Management Board. The Director has oversight of and responsibility for all Centre activities, technical programmes and industrial liaison. (Please also refer to the definition in Appendix 1 of the Full Membership Agreement)	In addition to duties arising from being part of RCNDE and a member of the MT, the RCNDE Director is also responsible for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting on complaints and/or information about breaches of the EDI policy by following the steps mentioned in Section 5. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Convening a meeting with the individual(s) who have breached the policy or have a complaint raised against them. Identifying, inviting, and ensuring the presence of a small panel of Board members in this same meeting.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Referring to the RCNDE Board individuals who repeatedly breach the EDI policy or refuse to acknowledge they have done so. ○ With the RCNDE Deputy Director, reviewing the data from the anonymised forms on the RCNDE website and making decisions about their use and sharing.
RCNDE Deputy Director		A member of the RCNDE Management Team. Will be a potential successor for the Director, subject to Management Board approval.	<p>In addition to duties arising from being part of RCNDE and a member of the MT, the RCNDE Director is also responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With the RCNDE Director, reviewing the data from the anonymised feedback forms on the RCNDE website and making decisions about their use and sharing. ● Acting in the Director's stead if the RCNDE Director is unavailable or has breached the policy/has a complaint raised against them.
NDEvR Board of Directors ('NDEvR Board')		Comprises individuals from the Centre's management, members' representatives and co-opted individuals agreed by the RCNDE Management board. (Please also refer to Appendix 1 (Centre Management) and 2 (Management of NDE Research Association) of the Full Membership Agreement.)	<p>In addition to duties arising from being part of RCNDE, the NDEvR Board are also responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing advice and feedback to the MT with regards to the EDI policy. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewing the performance and monitoring report created annually by the MT, and providing comments/feedback. ○ Reviewing the MT recommendations for changes to the EDI policy and providing advice and guidance as to whether they are sufficient or advisable. ● Acting broadly as an advisory group on EDI policies, procedures, and best practice.
RCNDE Management Board ('RCNDE Board')		Comprises Tier 1 Industrial, Tier 2 Industrial, and academic members. The Board has ultimate	<p>In addition to duties arising from being part of RCNDE, the RCNDE Management Board are also responsible for the following:</p>

Board', 'the Board')		responsibility for all policy and strategic issues, as well as approving and directing the Centre's activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing members as invited by the RCNDE Director to convene a panel for an informal meeting with an individual who has breached the EDI policy/is the subject of a complaint (see 5.b. above). • Undertaking to resolve an issue arising from a breach of the EDI policy or complaint where the individual concerned is a repeat offender or refuses to acknowledge his actions (see 5.c. above). • Working with the RCNDE MT to implement clause 17 and sub-clauses 17.1, 17.2, and 17.3 of the RCNDE Collaboration Agreement as needed to resolve situations arising from complaints or breaches of the EDI policy that cannot be resolved informally (see 5.d.-f.). • Ensuring that the EDI policy is fit for purpose and correctly implemented by the RCDNE MT. This includes reviewing the performance and monitoring report produced annually by the MT, identifying actions that need to be taken, and approving or rejecting recommended changes to the EDI policy.
Industry Chair of the RCNDE Management Board ('Industry Chair')		A representative of a Tier 1 Industrial member of the Centre, usually in a senior role within their organisation, who chairs RCNDE Board meetings.	In addition to duties arising from being part of RCNDE, the RCNDE Board, and, where applicable, the NDEvR Board, the Industry Chair is also responsible for acting in the RCNDE Director's stead for the purposes of 5.b. when the RCNDE Director has committed a breach of the EDI policy, or is the subject of a complaint. This duty is shared with the Academic Chair, and either role can perform it.
Academic Chair of the RCNDE Management Board ('Academic Chair')		A representative of an Academic member of the Centre, usually in a senior role within their institution, who chairs RCNDE Board meetings in the absence of the Industry Chair.	In addition to duties arising from being part of RCNDE, the RCNDE Board, and, where applicable, the NDEvR Board, the Academic Chair is also responsible for acting in the RCNDE Director's stead for the purposes of 5.b. when the RCNDE Director has committed a breach of the EDI policy, or is the subject of a complaint. This duty is shared with the Industry Chair, and either role can perform it.

Appendix C: RCNDE Collaboration Agreement, Clause 17

17. The Members shall use good faith efforts to resolve any dispute, claim or proceeding arising out of or relating to this Agreement via the Management Board. In the event that any disputes cannot be resolved at this level then the senior executives of the Members at dispute (the "Parties") who have authority to settle the same shall use good faith efforts to resolve the same. If the matter is not resolved through negotiation, it shall be settled as agreed by the Management Board by either 17.1 or 17.2 below:

17.1 Mediation in accordance with the Centre for Dispute Resolution ("CEDR") Model Mediation Procedure (the "Model Procedure"). To initiate mediation one Party must give notice in writing to the other Parties to the dispute requesting mediation pursuant to the Model Procedure. A copy of the request shall also be sent to CEDR. The mediation shall be before a single, jointly agreed upon, Mediator. The parties shall promptly provide the Mediator with (imposing appropriate obligations of confidence) all information reasonably requested by the mediator relating to the particular dispute. The expert shall be required by the Parties to use all reasonable endeavours to render his decision within 30 days following his receipt of the information requested, or if this is not possible as soon thereafter as may reasonably be practicable and the Parties shall co-operate fully with the Mediator to achieve this objective. The Parties shall share equally the fees and expenses of the mediation. The decision of the Mediator shall be final and binding upon each of the Parties.

17.2 Reference to the jurisdiction of the Courts in England. In this event, each of the Parties shall have the right to take proceedings in any other jurisdiction for the purposes of enforcing a judgement or order obtained from the Courts in England.

17.3 If the Steering Committee is unable to select a mutually agreeable Mediator or cannot agree on the forum in which any dispute is to be held within 60 days of a dispute being notified to the Management Board, then the provisions of Clause 17.2 shall apply.

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