

Meeting	Diversity and Inclusion Group
Date	22 October 2020
Title	Summary report from RCVS/VSC roundtable on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) student support
Classification	Unclassified
Summary	This paper includes a summary of the RCVS/VSC roundtable on BAME veterinary student support. A more detailed write up will follow. The Taskforce is invited to discuss the issues raised so that an action plan can be drawn up. There will also be a conversation at the Joint Officers meeting between VSC and RCVS on 23 October.
Decisions required	Feedback and discussion are welcomed
Attachments	Annex one – summary of information provided by vet schools Annex two – slides from speakers Annex three – completed worksheets
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Summary of RCVS Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) / Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Vet Student Support Roundtable

Timing

1. The roundtable took place virtually on 30 September and 12 October. It ended up taking place in two parts as the technology for the breakout groups did not work on 30 September. This had some pros and cons – on the plus side, people had time to think about the issues raised by the guest speakers before the discussion groups; on the downside, the attendance for the second session was lower as notice was shorter.

Scope and evaluation

2. The original plan was to hold a meeting looking at both recruitment and support. However at the 17 July meeting of the DIG it was proposed that we focus only on support as the two topics could be too large to tackle within the time constraints of an online meeting (which are inevitably shorter due to attention spans). In addition, the British Veterinary Association had carried out a roundtable on recruitment earlier in the year. In the event, however, many delegates wanted to discuss issues in relation to recruitment and felt that there was much to be done here, so a further event on this topic, in a similar format, will be planned.
3. This meeting focused on vet students. Something for VN students is under consideration.
4. The objectives for the event were as follows, the table indicates the extent to which they were met and what the next steps are:

Objectives	Progress so far	Next steps
Identify what the common challenges are in terms of supporting BAME students	We asked for 'big issues' which were debated in the roundtable sessions, and also personal experience from one of the guest speakers	Do the issues raised resonate with BAME students more widely? New survey via AVS?
Understand what is already being done and what good practice can be shared via gathering of information from the veterinary schools prior to the event	We gathered and circulated lots of detail on this – see annex one.	Could be interesting to review this in 12-18 months
Learn from outside the profession and outside the UK	Lisa Greenfield gave the US perspective and Sally Curtis spoke re medical education. Both were great speakers and well received See annex two for all speakers' slides	Continue our learning – DIG members encouraged to report in with any useful findings. LL is part of the Professional Association Research Network Special Interest Group on Diversity which should give us access to what other professions are doing

Objectives	Progress so far	Next steps
Understand what additional steps vet schools can take in terms of becoming anti-racist	The 'big issues' identified ahead of the meeting were discussed in groups. See annex 3 for the worksheets	This will be subject of discussion at the 22/10 meeting
Understand where RCVS structures and policies may need to change to support BAME students	This was considered as part of the breakout groups – see annex 3	This will be flagged to Education Committee and group looking at accreditation standards Also to consider structures around EMS and reporting
Consider solutions and potential collaborations	It was clear from the roundtable that solutions need to be collaborative, including vet schools, students, RCVS and employers/professionals	This will be the subject of discussion at the 22/10 meeting
Build a network that can continue after the event	A delegate list was circulated and it should form the basis for a group to reconvene to talk about progress and also recruitment, and also from which to ask for volunteers to take things forward	Consider plans for a session on recruitment

Principles and attendees

5. The principles for the event were as follows:
 - **Interactive:** no one here just to listen – so far as format allows
 - **Solution-oriented:** not just narrating the problem but finding solutions
 - **Future-focused:** we will share information about the current picture ahead of time so we can focus on what's next
 - **Democratic:** everyone in the room has equal voice, whether faculty, students etc
 - **All in it together:** solutions are not just for RCVS, or vet schools... everyone can support improvement, and no blame to be attached to where we are now
 - **Fun:** serious topic but we want people to go away energised and engaged

6. We held the event under the Chatham House rule and a report commissioned from freelance journalist John Bonner will not identify individuals unless their name appeared on the agenda.

7. Each of the nine UK veterinary schools, plus Utrecht and Dublin, were invited to send four delegates, ideally:
 - Head of School/Dean/Principal or other member of senior faculty
 - Staff member responsible for D&I support

- One undergraduate student – preferably BAME or D&I rep
 - One postgraduate student (research or taught) or in clinical training - preferably BAME and/or D&I rep
8. There were also members of the Veterinary Schools Council staff, RCVS staff, some RCVS DIG members (including AVS) and external speakers. University D&I leads were strongly encouraged to attend.
9. The exact number attending was hard to be sure of as it was an online meeting and people came in and out, but approximately 70 were expected and around 55 attended session one. We had around 35 for the second session.

Pre-event work

10. Before the event each vet school was asked to fill out a survey asking questions about their D&I data, how they support BAME students, flag up any research they have done etc. This was shared with all delegates ahead of the meeting. This can be found in appendix one.
11. Delegates were also asked to identify the biggest barrier to supporting BAME students, to inform the breakout groups. Some of the topics raised related to recruitment, but the following were the main issues raised in relation to support:
- I. Lack of support for students on EMS – clinical and pre-clinical
 - II. Lack of cultural awareness [NB this topic was not discussed in the end due to the group being too small so members were distributed to other groups]
 - III. Lack of visibility of role models and mentors
 - IV. Reporting on discrimination and acting on those reports
 - V. Overcoming bias and lack of inclusion throughout the school and wider veterinary community
 - VI. Understanding the specific experience of BAME students and creating safe spaces to discuss them
 - VII. How to show support that's meaningful and not tokenistic

Agenda

12. The agenda was as follows.

Part one – 30 September – setting the scene and guest speakers
Introduction and welcome from Dr Niall Connell, RCVS Senior Vice-President and Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Group
Dr Lisa Greenhill, Senior Director for Institutional Research and Diversity, Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges <i>Models of success for BAME in the United States</i>
Rheanna Ellis, final-year veterinary student at the University of Nottingham <i>Personal experience of being a BAME veterinary student</i>

Professor Sally Curtis, Professorial Fellow, Medical Education, University of Southampton
Case studies on what is working for BAME medical students

Q&A panel for the speakers, chaired by Dr Mandisa Greene, RCVS President

Part two – 12 October – tackling the issues – break-out groups

Lizzie Lockett, RCVS CEO, introducing this section and the plan

Break-out groups

Professor Rob Pettitt, VSC representative on RCVS DIG, facilitating feedback from groups

Professor Susan Dawson, Chair of VSC: summing up and what next

Break-out groups

13. Groups were assigned to the topics at paragraph 11. The groups were chosen to include a mix of faculty, support staff and students. They were asked to fill out worksheets that included the following questions:

- a. What does success look like?
- b. What are the barriers to success?
- c. What you learned from reading about what other schools are doing or from our speakers that might help?
- d. What else might help address the issue?
- e. What's the first step towards positive change?

14. The completed worksheets are in appendix 3. As explained above, there was no group 2. No worksheet came in for group four, but notes taken by LL on the day are as follows:

Reporting on discrimination and acting on those reports

- Success is not 'nothing to report', but having anonymous supporting system in place, students feeling comfortable, healthy and safe
- Clear and transparent systems are important – it's not always easy to find what a reporting process is, and when you do it may be very complex and off-putting – so simplify this for those in crisis or it can become a barrier
- There need to be outputs to improve the mental health of the victim – support may be needed so they can process what's happened
- It's important for victims to maintain control over the process and outcome – communication is key
- Need to train students to call out unacceptable behaviour
- Personal tutors should be trained to have these conversations with their tutees
- There should be training for people who want to develop safe spaces
- Such action needs to take place within the vet school rather than within the university at large
- Anonymous reporting app for microaggressions would be helpful

Comments and feedback

15. We have not put out a formal feedback form for the event but unprompted feedback was very positive, especially from students. There were calls for a follow up meeting in a similar format to discuss student recruitment. We are also keen to run something similar for VN students, although the first priority there is the roundtable on student mental health (which may well touch on this issue).
16. A draft report has been written by John Bonner and will be published in due course.

Discussion

17. The DIG is invited to read the information that came in from the vet schools (annex one), the slides from the speakers (annex two) and the worksheet output (annex three), then come to the meeting with the three things they feel are most important next actions. Preferably this would be something that their organisation could support, but not necessarily so.