

British Association for the Study of the Liver (BASL)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness (EDI) Policy

Related information:

BASL Privacy Policy

BASL Subject Access Policy

BASL Data Retention and Destruction Policy

BASL Data Breach Policy

BASL Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness Strategy

Information Commissioners Office

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BASL Equality and Diversity Policy – July 2024

1. Purpose

BASL is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to enhance the way we work.

BASL aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout its membership and for its employees. This includes the recruitment of members and employees, the support of training and development of members in the field of hepatology, in its communication with its membership and employees, in the election of governing board and affiliated committee members and in pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination.

This is highlighted in our mission statement within our Inclusiveness Strategy:

Our strategy is to foster an environment where all members of the Association feel a sense of belonging regardless of age, gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, profession, training level or place of work and feel that their voice is heard and represented at all levels of the Association and in all its activities.

BASL has a documented elections process within its Articles of Association which sets out how the BASL Governing Board are nominated and elected by the BASL Membership.

2. Equality and Diversity

We consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all employees, members and governing board appointments.

We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions.

We consider that - inclusivity means an organisation for all members and employees involved in the care of people with liver disease regardless of their role, place of work or pattern of work and regardless of race, religion, disability or sexual orientation and other protected characteristics.

BASL recommends that all members complete their ED&I certification as part of their mandatory training, at a frequency required by their hospital trusts.

3. Scope

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all members and employees and also to associated persons.

4. BASL's commitment

Every member and employee is entitled to an environment within the association and its affiliated committees (including SIGs) that promotes equality, dignity and inclusivity for all.

We will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination committed against a member or employee because of a protected characteristic such as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

5. When does this policy apply?

This policy applies to all conduct in relation to work within the association. This includes committee meetings, business meetings and BASL conferences or events. It applies also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work with BASL as for example your work as a Hepatologist or a Physician or Nurse caring for patients with liver disease, which may impact on BASL's reputation.

6. Breaches to this policy

Breaches to this policy can be reported in confidence to the secretariat and investigated by a committee convened under the BASL Ethics Committee as outlined in the Articles of Association.

7. Policy History and Revisions

- The policy will be reviewed with other related policies on an annual basis.
- It will also be updated if our delegated service providers change their policies as they are aligned. In this even a new version will be created and the older version(s) archived.

BASL - Women in Liver Research Network (WILRN)

Chairs: Shilpa Chokshi, Laura Pallett , Naiara Beraza

The Women in Liver Research Network (WILRN) aims to empower and elevate women in hepatology by promoting gender equality, fostering professional growth, and advocating for an inclusive research environment. It aims to provide an open and safe forum for discussions regarding gender disparities in liver research, leadership, and career advancement. We strive to support women at all career stages through networking, and collaborative opportunities, ensuring their contributions are recognised and valued.

Our mission is to create a diverse and equitable community where women in liver research can thrive and lead, driving innovative and impactful advancements in the field.

Objectives

- Offer a platform for sharing experiences and strategies for overcoming gender-specific challenges in the research environment.
- Access to tailored advice and support on managing career and family responsibilities, from those with 'lived experience' of gender disparities in research.
- Offer workshops, training sessions, and meetings focused on skill development, leadership, and career advancement for women researchers.
- Encourage collaborative research projects among women researchers and promote interdisciplinary studies within the field of hepatology, thus enhancing their professional network and visibility.
- Increase the visibility of women's contributions to liver research and advocate for their recognition through awards, publications, and speaking opportunities.
- Advocate for policies that support gender equality in science and research, including equal representation at conferences as speakers and session chairs, on-site childcare/creche provision and flexible working hours.
- Collecting and analysing data on gender disparities to advocate for policy changes and measure progress over time.

Challenges Faced by Women in Research

Whether in academic, clinical, translational, or social research, women face unique challenges that can hinder their career progression and place them out of synchrony with their counterparts. These challenges include:

- Childbearing and maternity responsibilities, which can lead to career interruptions.
- Caring responsibilities for older parents.
- Lack of provision for childcare at conferences and in research settings.
- Expectation to work late hours, which can conflict with family commitments.
- Lack of acknowledgement on contributions to research outputs during career breaks, maternity or family sick leave.
- Lack of fair and equal representation as speakers and chairs at conferences.

These factors contribute to the underrepresentation of women in senior research positions and create additional barriers to their professional advancement.

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Why It Is Important

Women are often underrepresented in senior positions within scientific research and academia. This network will help address this gap by providing targeted support.

Diverse research teams are known to produce more innovative and impactful research. Promoting women in liver research will enhance the diversity of ideas and approaches in the field.

Visible role models and mentors can inspire the next generation of women researchers, encouraging more young women to pursue careers in hepatology.

It is crucial to ensure that women have equal access to career development opportunities, funding, and leadership roles, contributing to a fair and equitable research environment.

Building a Supportive Community

Creating a supportive community where women can share experiences, challenges, and successes will foster a sense of belonging and encouragement. This community will be instrumental in driving change and ensuring that women researchers have the resources and support they need to succeed.