



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027



In 2020 we set out a three-year strategy to embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the profession and within the organisation.

Framed around three delivery pillars: Membership, Stakeholders and Organisation, the strategy sought to drive change and create a step change in the way in which ICAS embraced EDI.

There have been many successes along the way, but there is still much to do to ensure that we play our part in helping to create a fairer and more sustainable profession. As our current three-year strategy ends, it is time to reflect on what we have achieved.



Over the last three years (2020-2023) we have embraced EDI and wellbeing. We have increased awareness of these topics among our membership through targeted communications, thought leadership and practical resources.

We have embedded EDI into our Code of Ethics, operations and reporting and we have increased the visibility of wellbeing through numerous targeted campaigns and content.

We recognise that we are on a journey and that there are significant challenges

ahead, particularly as a membership organisation, to ensure that an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework is embedded.

That is why our EDI Strategy 2024-2027 will build upon what we have already achieved and is our renewed commitment to achieve even more. We are setting out a clear framework for our detailed programme of work through our EDI themes for 2024-2027.

These themes outline our priorities and our broader vision for fully embedding EDI among our profession.



Together, we will...

ICAS' Strategic Pillars

The 2024-27 EDI strategy will support the delivery of two key pillars detailed in ICAS' 2030 strategy, 'Together we will...'
By supporting the delivery of the ICAS strategy we will create impact and cohesion and ensure that we are targeting our efforts on the areas where we can affect the most change.

We will build on two of the five ICAS strategic pillars:

1. Sustainability at our Core

We'll lead on key sustainability issues within the profession and embed sustainability across our syllabus and training courses, including new electives and new continuing professional development (CPD). We'll embrace our net zero future and place equality, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. We'll drive social change in the profession, by supporting talent from less-advantaged backgrounds and growing the reach and capability of the ICAS Foundation. We'll create a sustainable, future-looking, 21st century professional body that continues to invest in our vision and the profession.

2. Ethical Leadership

We'll be bold in our influence and ensure that our voice is strong, respected, valued and sought by stakeholders. Everything we do will be in the public interest and deliver on the commitments defined by our Royal Charter obligations. We'll continue to build a strong and valued brand for ICAS and our Chartered Accountant (CA) qualification. We'll ensure that we're globally trusted to set and enforce consistent standards for the profession. And by speaking out on the issues that matter to our members, we'll champion positive change.



EDI themes

We have identified three key themes that will drive our EDI ambitions to create a fairer, inclusive and more equal profession.

These themes link directly to the over-arching ICAS strategy and will support the delivery of the Sustainability at our Core and the Ethical Leadership strategic pillars.



Theme 1: Social mobility

Attracting a diverse pool of talent into the profession is not only the right thing to do, but it also resonates with our Royal Charter to act in the public interest.



Diversity of thinking and approach is something all businesses will benefit from, and we will play our part in widening access to the profession. Social mobility is a crucial factor in the creation of a vibrant, sustainable and healthy economy and supporting the aims and ambitions of the ICAS Foundation will help us to enable change in the profession.

How will we approach this?

We will take a partnership approach to support the ICAS Foundation to thrive, by helping to unlock the potential of academically talented individuals from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, and we will play our part in helping this pool of talent to achieve their true potential.

We will also continue with our partnership with the Rise* initiative, to support those from lower socio-economic backgrounds to access workplace skills.

We will also be proactive, investing in and driving our own initiatives, through our CA syllabus, and we will launch a new college pathway which will be aimed at increasing access to the profession.

We are working with universities to increase access to our graduate apprentice route which will help us to further drive social mobility within the profession.

What does success look like?

That the aims and the objectives of the ICAS Foundation are delivered and the charity thrives and grows in the future. Member awareness of the ICAS Foundation increases and the benefits of supporting the ICAS Foundation and increasing the social mobility in the profession are understood and supported by our members. That our routes to membership are inclusive and help us to widen the pool of talent training with ICAS.

How will we measure our success?

- Increase the number of donations to the ICAS Foundation.
- Increase the number of students who are supported by the ICAS Foundation.
- Increase the number of students accessing our training through college and graduate apprentice routes.
- Increase the number of accountancy firms participating in the Rise initiative.

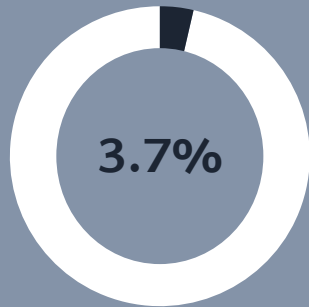
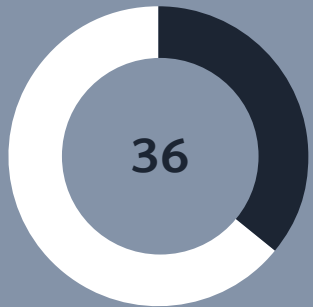
*RISE is a UK-wide initiative aimed at offering students, aged between 14 and 16 from low socio-economic backgrounds, an opportunity to participate and gain skills in the workplace.



Theme 2: Equality

A 2022 Green Park report found that women and ethnic minorities are still being overlooked for senior roles.

Across the FTSE 100 companies, there are just 36 women in total holding the top three leadership roles (Chair, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer). The report also found that ethnic minority representation in top leadership roles remains stagnant at 3.7%.



We want to play our part in creating a fair and equal profession and will focus our activity on placing greater emphasis on gender and race equality. We will shape the debate and drive positive change throughout the profession.



How will we approach this?

We will positively champion diverse talent within the profession and create the right networks and support to help talent thrive. We will address poor business culture and promote a culture of inclusion and equality through continued communication with our members and member firms. We will adhere to the commitments we have made to the Women in Finance Charter and the Charter for Black Talent in the Professions, and we will socialise and champion the results of the 2023 Chartered Accountants Worldwide 'Fostering Female Ambition' research to ensure we help to create change and diversity in the profession.

What does success look like?

We will change the face of accountancy to ensure that diverse talent thrives. We will attract a diverse talent pool to pursue a career in accountancy and will improve retention rates in the profession by providing the right support and ladders to help members and students reach their full potential.

How will we measure our success?

- Increase the diversity of the talent pool to study our qualifications.
- Improve the inclusivity of the profession.

Theme 3: Wellbeing

Valuing wellbeing and unique styles of thinking, communicating, and working are integral to all our equality objectives.

Through this theme, we will ensure that our members and students are supported and have access to resources and assistance. We will speak out on the value of mental health and will ensure that we continue to embed our mental fitness pledge.

How will we approach this?

We will work with relevant charities and other partners to further our understanding, reach, and scope. We will bring our former EDI and mental fitness strategies together and renew our efforts to focus on wellbeing, resilience, and health.

We will implement sustained campaigns to support members and students around the support that ICAS can offer, and we will be there in the moments that matter to them.



What does success look like?

We will increase awareness of ICAS EDI activity among our membership and promote a culture of wellbeing within the profession.

How will we measure our success?

- Further promote the confidential wellbeing helpline/counselling/app to increase use among members in small and medium firms and our students.
- Scope out increasing the wellbeing helpline to members in business and those based internationally, with a focus on those who work for a company that does not offer this service.
- Through the provision of resources to help build and maintain a healthy and resilient profession and we will measure our impact through our annual quant surveys.





Summary

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 is a working document that will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to make sure it continues to be significant and valuable.

We'll report on our progress annually. These updates will include EDI data on our member and students, continuing to embed EDI into our communications and events programme and measuring our impact. We will continue to upskill and support our internal workforce and we will develop dedicated workplans to support our core themes which will be created along with a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure our success.



References

- [ICAS Strategy 2030 Together we will... Rise Initiative](#)
- [Chartered Accountants Worldwide Fostering Female Ambition report](#)
- [Green Park Business Leaders Index report](#)
- [ICAS Mental Fitness Pledge](#)



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