

Supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in speech and language therapy pre-registration degrees

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) is committed to equality, inclusion and creating better lives for all. We have developed this joint statement and the accompanying infographic with the universities that provide speech and language therapy pre-registration degrees. Our aim is to provide prospective and existing learners with information about the ways in which the speech and language therapy profession is embedding equality, inclusivity and diversity into its admissions processes, in the teaching of speech and language therapy degrees, on placements and in support for students from diverse backgrounds.

The RCSLT has been focused on encouraging a more diverse entry to the profession in recent years, and on how to support those students through their studies. We have also established new working groups that are open to students, looking at gender, disability, ethnicity and the wider aspects of diversity in the profession. The killing of African Americans George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, amongst others, brought to the fore the racism and discrimination faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic community members every day. The RCSLT stands with the Black community and other minority ethnic communities against all forms of racism, whether overt, insidious or structural, and we expect all our members to do the same.

The RCSLT acknowledges that the profession is not as diverse as we would like it to be. We want to see a profession that reflects the communities it serves. We and the universities that offer speech and language therapy degrees, welcome more applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, from people with a disability, from men, from people who speak languages other than English, from people from economically under-represented communities and from the LGBTQ+ community.

The RCSLT and universities are working together to review and look at best practice in the admission of students and in programmes of teaching that ensure professional education is based on the awareness and appreciation of each individual's culture. Our aims are that learners feel supported throughout, can raise concerns when they need to, and that those concerns are dealt with constructively.

The RCSLT will continue to actively work with universities and members to do everything we can to bring about positive change.

