



TUS

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre, An tIarthar Láir
Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest

TUS Policy on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

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1. Introduction

Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) is committed to the principles and promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of the TU's activity and this policy details how this commitment will be implemented.

A core value, as stated in TUS Strategic Plan 2023-2026, is inclusivity: *We embrace diversity as a key strength where everyone is included and has an equal opportunity to progress and achieve.* TUS promotes inclusion of all and embraces equality of opportunity and diversity of perspective. We facilitate active engagement with the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion through providing opportunities for all our students and staff to thrive in higher education.

We support and empower those studying and working in TUS to explore, understand and develop inclusive practices for the benefit of everyone connected both directly and indirectly, with TUS. Through celebrating diversity and difference, and the provision of an inclusive, participative culture and environment, staff and students develop a sense of involvement within our TUS community and wider community, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

TUS values the enrichment that comes from a diverse community of students and staff. The university is committed to the principles of equality in all aspects of access, experience, progression, and achievement for both students and staff through developing and implementing clear policies, processes, practices providing effective support to help realise equality in student experience and in employment.

This policy will provide a framework for TUS to meet its obligations both as a public service provider and as an equal opportunities employer.

1.1 Statement of Commitment

TUS is committed to:

- promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of activity; employment, education and service provision.

- non-discrimination for all students, staff and external personnel in relation to any of the specified nine grounds of gender, family status, civil status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller Community, Roma Community or on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage¹. Note: While the Nine Grounds of Discrimination under the Equal Status Acts 2000 --2018 notes the Traveller Community, TUS extends this description to also include the Roma Community² as recognition of our commitment to this Community.
- supporting an inclusive and supportive environment of dignity and respect where all staff and students can develop their full potential.
- non-tolerance of harassment and bullying of staff, students, and other members of the TUS community.
- identifying barriers to equality, diversity, inclusion and full participation and any identified imbalances in practice will be redressed.

1.2 Legislative Context

The principle of equality is enshrined in the Irish Constitution and in many international and EU treaties and declarations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sees equality as a fundamental principle in terms of a person's human rights – 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights', Art. 1.

This policy is informed by the Employability Equality Acts 1998-2015 (as amended) and Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 (as amended), which prohibit direct and indirect discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation on nine specified grounds; gender, family status, civil status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community.

The Equal Status Acts prohibit discrimination in access to and provision of services, including education. The Employment Equality Acts prohibit discrimination in

¹ Identified as a Priority Group in the National Access Plan *A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028*

² Ibid

employment, including recruitment, promotion, pay and other conditions of employment.

S.19 of the Technological Universities Act 2018 requires Technological Universities to prepare, publish and implement an Equality Statement setting out (a) the policy of the Technological University for enabling access to it, and the education it provides, by economically or socially disadvantaged persons, by persons who have a disability and by persons from sections of society significantly under-represented in the student body, and (b) the policy of the Technological University relating to equality, including gender equality, in all activities of the Technological University. [TUS-Equality-Statement.pdf](#)

The Disability Act 2005 (as amended) places obligations on public bodies to provide integrated access to services and information to people with disabilities, as well as promoting the employment of people with disabilities.

The Public Sector Duty introduced under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 requires that, in the performance of their functions, public bodies shall have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment and protect the human rights of staff and external personnel.

This policy reflects TUS's commitment to meet its obligations under all of the aforementioned Acts, and also to be proactive in promoting equality in the spirit of the Acts.

1.3 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all applicants for employment, all staff members (whether full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary) and all those who work for or on behalf of the TU in any capacity and relates to decisions made in respect of recruitment and selection, career progression, learning and development and terms and conditions of employment.

- This policy applies to student applicants, registered students, and alumni, and relates to decisions made in respect of access, experience, provision of teaching and related support services, assessment, progression, and award.
- This policy applies to all visitors, customers, clients, service providers and contractors and relates to services provided by the TU while carrying out its activities, whether internally and externally.

Note: hereafter external personnel will be used to denote customers, members of the public, visitors and clients.

1.4 Mainstreaming

TUS is committed to ensuring that Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), is embedded and mainstreamed into every aspect of TU life which includes assessing the impact of our policies, procedures, practices and communications on equality, diversity, and inclusion and how these promote EDI.

1.5 Other Policies & Procedures

This policy should be applied in conjunction with the following TUS policies and procedures:

- TUS Dignity & Respect at Work Policy & Procedure
- TUS Equal Opportunities Policy
- TUS Student Policy on Dignity & Respect: Dealing with Harassment and/or Bullying among Students
- TUS Student Complaints and Problem Resolution Procedure
- TUS Student Code of Conduct
- TUS Student Reasonable Accommodation Policy

1.6 Definitions

Applicable definitions are set out in Appendix 1

2 Implementation

2.1 Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to ensure equality and access and will work through its Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee to ensure this statutory responsibility is discharged.

The Governing Body's EDI Committee will be responsible for:

- Advising the Governing Body on its Statutory obligations, including the Equality Statement as required under the TU Act 2018 s6.19, HEA 2022 s3.62 and best practice in relation to EDI matters.
- Examining and making recommendations for approval to Governing Body regarding relevant EDI policies and monitoring the implementation of such policies.
- Reviewing and recommending programmes of change to eliminate bias and remove barriers to equality of opportunity.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Steering Committee is responsible for:

- Providing guidance and direction for the achievement of equality, diversity and inclusion objectives across the TU, to identify and help remove barriers.
- Promoting the EDI agenda in the TU, ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is a key consideration in all planning and development undertaken at the TU and is underpinned by sufficient resourcing and support.
- Making recommendations for the enhancement of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the TU and suggesting action measures to prevent any gaps/oversights/deficits in the area of equality and diversity.
- Ensuring the promotion, communication, and mainstreaming of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the TU and that appropriate and effective training is provided at governance, management, faculty, staff, and student levels.
- Advising on steps necessary to ensure that the TU complies fully with all legislative requirements in relation to equality matters, with particular reference to the Employment Equality Acts 1998 - 2011, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2012, the Disability Act 2005 and any other relevant legislation.

The TU Management Team shall ensure that:

- They take a leadership role in all TU equality, diversity, and inclusion related matters and that there is strong leadership on equality, diversity, and inclusion across TUS.
- That, in line with the Public Sector Duty, equality is promoted, discrimination prevented and the human rights of everyone affected by policies and plans are protected.
- Training on equality, diversity and inclusion related matters is made available to all staff, including bystander intervention.
- Staff, students, and members of the TUS community are treated fairly across the nine equality grounds along with socio-economic status and where there is an issue the TU will take prompt action over alleged discrimination and harassment.

Those with Line Management Responsibilities have a responsibility to:

- Set a good example by treating all members of the TU community with dignity and respect.
- Manage unacceptable behaviours in accordance with relevant policies.
- Increase awareness and promote a positive working, research, teaching, learning and social environment.
- Ensure that due consideration is given to equality, diversity, and inclusion within their areas of responsibility e.g., policy development and decision making.
- Participate in training, which supports the promotion of TUS core value of inclusivity and the implementation of TUS Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, as appropriate, and to ensure that those in their area do likewise.

Each member of staff has a role under the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, in that they are responsible for their own behaviour but also responsible for ensuring that they carry out their role in line with this policy. Individuals, therefore, are:

- Responsible for making themselves aware of the TU's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.
- Expected to participate in training which supports the implementation of the TU's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, as appropriate.

- Responsible for their own behaviour and expected to treat others with dignity and respect.
- Responsible for ensuring, in their work that a supportive and respectful environment is created to facilitate inclusivity of diverse views and perspectives
- In line with the Public Sector Duty, promote equality, prevent discrimination, and protect the human rights of everyone affected by their policies, actions, and plans.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee is responsible for reviewing the policy regularly, in the context of data collected on equality, diversity and inclusion indicators such as staff profile, gender balance of committees, recruitment and selection statistics.

2.2 Communication

Information materials produced by the TU are provided in a relevant and accessible manner to students, staff, and external personnel.

Information in paper, electronic and web formats shall be made accessible following best practice guidelines on clear print and alternative formats.

Advertising and marketing strategies are non-discriminatory and will communicate the TUS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Direct contact with students, staff and external personnel shall be conducted in a courteous and professional manner consistent with an environment of dignity and respect.

TUS shall communicate this policy widely to reach all staff, manager, students, external personnel, Trade Unions and associations, and business contractors via a broad range of channels.

2.3 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Awareness

TUS shall offer equality, diversity and inclusion awareness programmes and campaigns in order to assist in the implementation of this policy throughout the TU.

2.4 Business contracts

TUS will seek to ensure that other companies from whom it is contracted to receive goods and services are aware that this policy is in place and that such companies are expected to comply with it. Any breach of this contract may constitute grounds for suspension or cancellation of such a contract.

3 Equality & Diversity in Service Provision (Students, Staff and External Personnel)

TUS is committed to equality, diversity and non-discrimination in relation to all aspects of service provision.

3.1 Students

TUS will ensure equality of access and opportunity for students and will ensure its admission processes, assessment, administration and other procedures do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any student in relation to any of the nine equality grounds or on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage.

3.1.1 Widening participation

As part of our commitment to the HEA National Access Plan [2022 – 2028](#), TUS is committed to widening participation for all student cohorts and to that end offers a comprehensive range of supports for students , throughout the student lifecycle.

3.1.2 Inclusive Teaching & Learning

TUS seeks to embed inclusiveness within all activities and academic practices, including teaching, assessment, and research.

3.2 Supporting Diversity

TUS will seek to provide high-quality services in an inclusive, accessible, and flexible manner for students, staff, and external personnel.

TUS will seek to accommodate the diversity of students, staff, and external personnel from across the nine equality grounds, socio-economic disadvantage, and other under-represented groups.

TUS will actively identify and address needs and associated barriers to accessing education and utilising various data, feedback and consultation methods.

TUS will take positive action measures to promote equality of opportunity for persons from across the nine equality grounds and socio-economic disadvantage, where necessary.

TUS will ensure flexibility in the operation of systems and services to accommodate the needs of the diverse community of students, staff, and external personnel.

3.2.1 Reasonable Accommodation of People with Disabilities

TUS seeks to ensure that students, staff, and external personnel with a disability have as complete and equitable an access to all services and facets of TU life as can reasonably be provided. TUS is committed to a programme of improving and enhancing the physical access to facilities and to providing accessible information.

TUS seeks to create an environment where students, staff and external personnel with disabilities can discuss their needs in confidence with relevant University functions which will seek to make reasonable accommodations for those needs.

Students or incoming students may register with the Disability Support Service and staff or prospective staff may contact the HR Office, to discuss their needs on a confidential basis and to access relevant supports.

3.3 Promoting Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Services

TUS continues to develop systems to collect and analyse a broad range of information relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion as it relates to the student, staff and external personnel.

From time to time, surveys, focus groups, external review and other means of consultation are deployed as appropriate mechanisms of feedback. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee has a particular role in overseeing the development and embedding of this process and shall report on the implementation of this policy in their reporting and review processes.

4 Equality & Diversity in Employment

TUS is committed to equality, diversity and non-discrimination in relation to employment practices and procedures.

4.1 Recruitment and selection of staff

In relation to the recruitment and selection of staff, TUS shall

- Adhere to the TU's approved Recruitment, Selection & Appointment Policy
- Not discriminate directly or indirectly against any applicant or candidate seeking employment based on any of the nine equality grounds, or in socio economic status.
- Select candidates based on merit and ensure that candidates with the demonstrable skills, competencies, talent, and experience most suited to the advertised post are selected.
- Identify and remove barriers that might impede the application or selection of an eligible candidate, across all nine specified equality grounds and socio-economic disadvantage.
- Ensure that application processes are open to any eligible candidate who may wish to apply.
- Provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities through the selection process.

- Develop inclusive recruitment practices that acknowledge the diversity of applicants and candidates for employment.
- Provide a flexible service and facilitate communication between applicants and recruitment staff to facilitate the recruitment process.
- Seek information on the diversity profile of employment applicants to monitor the success of recruitment campaigns in attracting a diversity of applicants.
- Seek feedback and consult with applicants or other stakeholders to ensure quality of service.
- Ensure transparency of recruitment procedures.

4.1.1 Recruitment advertising

- Provide job specifications that set out essential, and desirable requirements, skills, knowledge, experience and competencies for each person.
- Ensure that the drafting of job descriptions and advertisements does not directly or indirectly exclude any potential applicant.
- Ensure that the drafting of job descriptions does not include unnecessary requirements that would unfairly exclude or dissuade potential applicants.
- Direct and target recruitment to ensure that advertisements reach a broad and diverse candidate pool.

4.1.2 Shortlisting

- Provide EDI/unconscious bias training as part of the recruitment, shortlisting and interviewing skills training, to all who participate in shortlisting.
- Ensure that the criteria used for shortlisting are transparent and unbiased and are applied equally to all candidates.

4.1.3 Interview panels

- Provide EDI/unconscious bias training as part of the recruitment, shortlisting and interviewing skills training, to all who participate on selection panels.
- Use an agreed and objective system of rating candidates (by experience, skill, qualifications etc, as relevant)
- Ensure that interview panels are of mixed gender and will be made fully aware of their responsibilities.

- Offers of employment at TUS may be subject to a health screening by an external medical examiner.
- Employees who disclose a disability will be provided with reasonable accommodation.

4.2 Training and development

TUS will

- Ensure that every employee has equal access to training and development opportunities regardless of any of the nine equality grounds.
- Seek to ensure that programmes provided are inclusive and accommodate the diversity of staff.
- Mainstream equality and diversity issues in training programmes where relevant.

4.3 Progression

TUS will

- Ensure that all staff enjoy equal access to progression and promotional opportunities regardless of any of the nine equality grounds.
- Communicate promotional posts to all staff and provide training and support on the process including applications.
- Monitor promotional processes to ensure equality of opportunity in career progression in the TU.
- Identify barriers to progression for staff with reference to the nine specified grounds and, where appropriate, implement measures to redress imbalances.

4.4 Retention and wellbeing

TUS will

- Seek to retain and develop the potential and talents of all staff.
- Assist employees who develop a disability to integrate back into the work environment based on medical advice following a medical examination by the University's Occupational Health Physician.
- Provide equal access to work life balance policies and benefits as appropriate.
- Provide access to the Employee Assistance Programme as widely as possible.

- Provide regular updates and information to staff regarding benefits and entitlements.
- Give due consideration to the accommodation of diversity throughout all industrial relations matters (e.g., gender balance on disciplinary committees)

5 Monitoring and Review, Complaints procedures

5.1 Monitoring and review

TUS shall actively seek feedback on the implementation and review of this policy from staff, students, and external personnel.

The implementation of this policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis by the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee and the policy shall be updated on foot of this review or other legislative changes.

Each service, administrative and academic area shall include a report addressing the implementation of this policy as part of their review cycle and this will serve to inform the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee as part of its on-going monitoring of progress on the implementation process.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee shall provide annual progress reports to Governing Body and TU Management Team on the implementation of this policy.

5.2 Complaints procedures

The relevant complaint procedure to be utilised will depend upon the nature of the complaint. The Office of the Vice President for People, Culture & EDI will provide information on the framework for handling EDI complaints across all areas of the University's activities in line with agreed University policies and procedures. This information will be collated and published by the Office of the Vice President for People, Culture & EDI and will be communicated widely to staff and students.

TUS complaint procedures do not affect the right of a person to initiate a complaint under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 or the Employability Equality Acts 1998-2015.

5.2.1 Employment Complaints

Complaint procedures for staff members regarding employment matters follow the usual staff grievance procedures.

5.2.2 Academic Complaints

Complaint procedures for academic matters (students) follow academic review and appeals procedures as approved by Academic Council.

5.2.3 Bullying & Harassment Complaints

For staff, consult the TUS Dignity & Respect at Work Policy and Procedure. For students, consult TUS Student Policy on Dignity & Respect: Dealing with Harassment and/or Bullying among Students.

Appendix 1 Definitions

Bullying: repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. Once-off incidents are not considered a form of bullying.

Discrimination: treatment or potential treatment that is less favourable than another person in a comparable situation based on the nine equality grounds. This includes direct and indirect discrimination.

Direct Discrimination: occurs when one person is treated less favourably than someone else due to one or more of the nine equality grounds.

Indirect Discrimination: occurs when an apparently neutral practice or policy puts someone belonging to one or more of the nine equality grounds at a disadvantage in comparison to someone else. This includes when there is a practice or policy that has a worse effect on certain groups or individuals.

Discrimination by Association: where a person is treated less favourably due to an association with someone belonging to one or more of the nine equality grounds.

Discrimination by Imputation: when a person is treated less favourably due to being labelled as belonging to one or more of the nine equality grounds.

Equality Grounds: the nine grounds upon which people cannot be discriminated against and/or experience harassment/ sexual harassment as defined by the Equal Status Act and the Employment Equality Act.

- Gender – a person's identity as male or female (including transgender persons). A person may identify away from the binary gender model.
- Civil Status – single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, in a civil partnership or being a former civil partner.
- Family Status – responsibility as a parent or as a person in loco parentis in relation to a person under 18, or as a parent or the resident primary carer of a person over 18 with a disability.
- Sexual Orientation – including but not limited to Heterosexual, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Asexual.

- Disability - temporary or permanent conditions impacting the physical, mental or emotional functioning of a person, including a range of medical conditions, learning, intellectual and cognitive disabilities.
- Race– including Race, Colour, Nationality, or Ethnic or National Origins.
- Religious Belief – including different religious affiliations as well as absence of religious beliefs.
- Member of the Traveller Community – referring to the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.
- Age – this only applies to persons over 16.
- Socio-economic status – TUS policy goes further than considering the none grounds under the Employment Equality Act by also taking into consideration socio-economic status. Defined as a combined economic and sociological measure of a person’s work experience and of an individual’s economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

Harassment: any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine equality grounds which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. Once-off incidents can be deemed to constitute a form of harassment.

Positive Action: defined by the Employment Equality Act as measures maintained or adopted with a view to ensuring full equality in practice to prevent or level the impact of disadvantages linked to any of the nine equality grounds, to protect the health and safety of persons with a disability, or to create or maintain facilities for safeguarding or promoting the integration of such persons into the University.