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

Equal Opportunities Policy

2026-2029

HUMAN RESOURCES

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1. Introduction

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in employment, in which staff are treated equitably, and where they can realise their potential, whatever their status in relation to Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race or Membership of the Travelling Community. TUS is committed to ensuring a work environment free from discrimination on the above-mentioned grounds, in accordance with the relevant legislation. In relation to discrimination based on nationality, nothing in the relevant legislation shall render unlawful, any action taken, in accordance with the Employment Permits Act, Amended 2003 - 2014.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the University's objective of ensuring that there is no discrimination, either direct or indirect, against any individual or group (in particular that based on the nine grounds: gender, marital/civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the traveller community) with regard to employment, education or access to opportunities or facilities.

The objectives of this policy are:

- TUS wishes to maintain a harmonious working environment for staff based on mutual respect within which staff are encouraged to develop their full potential in the interests of the individual, and of the University.
- Under its duty to provide reasonable accommodation, TUS will take practical steps to accommodate the needs of staff and prospective staff with disabilities.
- There will be a commitment to implementing policies, procedures and practices that ensure opportunities are made available, equally, to all staff.
- All TUS communication will contain language free from any bias or discrimination.
- All employment decisions will be made, having regard to the nine grounds, outlined above.
- TUS will communicate and reinforce the principles of equality throughout the University, by providing information, awareness sessions and guidance on relevant policies and procedures.

- TUS will ensure that fair and timely dispute resolution mechanisms are made accessible within the University to deal with complaints concerning equality, discrimination, and harassment. (Please refer to the TU's Policy on Dignity and Respect at Work and the nationally agreed Grievance Procedure)
- TUS will strive to fulfil the government employment objective for the employment of persons with a disability.

3. Definitions

Equality is about ensuring that individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly. Equality seeks to advance equality of opportunity in access to employment or a programme of study, training, development, career opportunities etc without any direct or indirect discrimination, or conscious or unconscious biases.

Discrimination

The Employment Equality Acts, 1998 - 2015, outlaw discrimination in a wide range of employment and employment-related areas. These include recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment. The legislation defines discrimination as treating one person in a less favourable way than another person based on any of the following grounds:

- Gender: man, woman, or a transgender person
- Civil status: includes single, married, separated, divorced, widowed people, civil partners, and former civil partners.
- Family status: this refers to the parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability.
- Sexual orientation; includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual or pansexual
- Religion; means religious belief, background outlook or none
- Age: this applies to a person 16 years or over
- Disability; includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions.

- Race; includes race, skin colour, nationality, or ethnic origin
- Membership of the Traveller Community

Direct discrimination is taken to occur where a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated, in a comparable situation, on any of the nine grounds specified due to a fact or circumstance which:

- exists,
- existed but no longer exists,
- may exist in the future,
- or is imputed to the person concerned.

Discrimination also occurs where a person is, has been, or would be, treated less favourably than another, in a comparable situation, due to an association with another person, on any of the grounds listed in the scope of the legislation.

Indirect Discrimination occurs where an employer sets down an apparently neutral provision which operates to the disadvantage of one of the nine categories. It occurs when the provision cannot be objectively justified by a legitimate, reasonable aim and the means of achieving the aim are not appropriate and necessary.

4. Scope

This policy applies to staff, and to the University's interactions with the wider community. TUS is fully committed to providing equal opportunities in access to education, employment/promotion opportunities, training, development and terms and conditions of employment.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every line manager/supervisor within TUS to:

- Support the equal opportunities policy and encourage an environment where equality diversity and inclusion are promoted. All staff who have responsibility for the management or supervision of other staff have a particular responsibility for promoting equality of opportunity and a harmonious working environment.

- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality legislation and to monitor compliance with the equal opportunities policy.
- Report and assist in the resolution of any equality-related concerns that arise.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Ensure that their behaviour and actions do not amount to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation in any way.
- Recognise and respect the rights of other members of the University's community and contribute to the development of a harmonious environment for employees.
- Co-operate with any reasonable measures introduced by the University to promote equal opportunities.

Should a staff member act in contravention of this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. All staff have a responsibility to cooperate with any investigation regarding equality issues.

6. Policy Statement

6.1. TUS is committed to creating a working environment free from discrimination which supports equality and diversity. TUS acknowledges that all staff are legally entitled to equal treatment and equal access to opportunities. TUS believes that embracing equality and diversity in the workplace benefits all staff. Each staff member brings their own background, distinct capabilities, experience, and characteristics to their work. TUS will work to proactively promote equality and create an environment that positively fosters diversity and inclusion amongst staff. It is the University's goal to equally value the individual differences and contributions of all staff.

6.2. TUS will continue to develop policies, procedures and practices that comply with legislation, such as the TU Act 2018 (as amended), the Employment Equality Acts 1998 - 2015, the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2015, the Disability Act 2005, and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, amongst others. Harassment or discrimination of any kind is prohibited under the following grounds: gender, marital/civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the traveller community. A person is deemed to be discriminated against, if they are treated less favourably than another person, based on any of these

nine grounds. Indirect discrimination occurs where a certain group is placed at a disadvantage as a result of unjustifiable criteria or practices.

6.3. TUS is committed to addressing unfair and discriminatory practices, direct and indirect, however and whenever they occur, and strives to ensure that concepts of diversity and equality of opportunity are enshrined in its values and objectives.

6.4. This policy also refers to equality in the context of access to opportunities and the application of policies and practices. This policy should be read in conjunction with the TU Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and Procedure.

7. Recruitment and Selection Process

7.1. All advertisements for job vacancies will be reviewed to ensure that they are aligned with this policy and will clearly state that the *"TUS is an equal opportunities employer, working towards creating and sustaining an inclusive environment which promotes equality, embraces diversity and is committed to promoting work life balance for all."*

7.2. In consultation with the relevant stakeholders, all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the application process is accessible to all applicants. Such accommodation will take place at all relevant stages of the recruitment processes. For further details please refer to the Recruitment, Selection & Appointment Policy.

8. Staff Development, Promotion & Career Progression

8.1. As well as treating people with dignity and respect, TUS strives to create a supportive environment in which all staff can flourish and reach their full potential. TUS aims to ensure that development and training opportunities are available and accessible to all staff.

8.2. TUS encourages promotion and progression of staff within the University, regardless of their gender, marital/civil status, family status, religious beliefs, race, age, sexual orientation, disability, or membership of the traveller community. Therefore, these opportunities will be made available to staff with regard to the nine grounds listed above.

8.3. It will not be assumed that family commitments lead to limited career aspirations.

8.4. TUS is committed to monitoring the promotion process, to assess equality of opportunity in this area. All internal employment vacancies will be advertised on the Human Resources ESS portal page, and all relevant staff will be notified by email.

9. Work-Life Balance

There are a range of work-life/family friendly policies open to staff aimed at enhancing work-life balance, examples of which include work-sharing, career break, shorter working year, parental leave etc (further details are available on the Human Resources webpage). Staff who avail of these schemes will not be treated less favourably than employees who do not.

10. Harassment And Bullying

TUS is committed to promoting an environment that is free of harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying, and within which all the University's community will be treated with dignity and respect. It is recognised that harassment and bullying can seriously damage working and social conditions, and neither will be tolerated in the TUS community. (Please refer to the TUS Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and Procedures and any other policies which may be developed).

11. Compliance/Monitoring Review

TUS will continue to implement Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plans, remove barriers to equality, and promote the concepts of diversity, equality and inclusion of opportunity. This policy will be reviewed every 4 years to ensure that it continues to effectively support and reinforce the TU's commitment to equality, unless legislation requires more immediate amendments.

12. Queries

For enquiries on this policy please contact the relevant HR Department:
TUS Midlands: hr.midlands@tus.ie TUS Midwest: hr.midwest@tus.ie