



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)
2024 - 2027

TUS Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Vision

TUS is recognised as a leader in advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion. TUS promotes and supports a culture where diversity is celebrated and is a driver and influencer of cultural and societal change locally, regionally, and nationally.

Statement on Mission for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in TUS

Our Technological University promotes inclusion of all and embraces equality of opportunity and diversity of perspective. We are a TU with a 'Heart' facilitating active engagement, 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 student develop a sense of involvement within our TUS community and wider community (regionally, nationally, and internationally).

Strategic Context

One of our core values, as stated in TUS Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026, is being inclusive: *We embrace diversity as a key strength where everyone is included and has an equal opportunity to progress and achieve.* This core value serves to underpin our EDI Mission.

TUS Strategic Plan 2023-2026 identifies four Strategic Priorities for the TU over the forthcoming four years. This EDI Strategy serves to deliver on Strategic Priority 2: People and Organisation which is to *operate as an integrated organisation, where everyone's potential can be realised, and where all individuals are provided with equal opportunities.*

TUS Strategy will be achieved through the execution of several cross-cutting objectives which have been aligned to four overarching Strategic Priorities. One objective aligned to Strategic Priority 2: People and Organisation which is of relevance to this EDI Strategy is:

Objective 3: Create an inclusive Technological University that people are proud to be part of and where our diverse population has a voice.

TUS is committed to our statutory responsibility to ensure that all staff and students are treated equally. This is enshrined in the Employability Equality Acts 1998-2018, Equal Status Acts 2000-2018, Disability Act 2005, and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, which introduced the Public Sector Duty.

The Public Sector Duty requires that TUS, as a public body, has regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment and protect the human rights of staff and students in the delivery of services.

Technologies Universities Act 2018 requires the attainment of gender balance and equality of opportunity to be promoted among the students and staff of the Technological University. In addition, the Act places an obligation on a Technological University to perform its functions respecting the diversity of values, beliefs and traditions in Irish society. Accordingly, TUS articulates its commitment to meet its obligations under the TU Act, and also to be proactive in promoting equality in the spirit of this Act.

What does Equality, Diversity & Inclusion mean to TUS?

Equality seeks to advance equality of opportunity across TUS. This involves access to employment or a programme of study, training, development, career opportunities etc without any direct or indirect discrimination, or conscious or unconscious biases.

Diversity means more than just acknowledging differences, it is about placing a positive value on those differences between people and their experiences, personal and professional. Diversity involves understanding, appreciating and embracing differences and developing a culture of respect for qualities and experiences that are different from the majority.

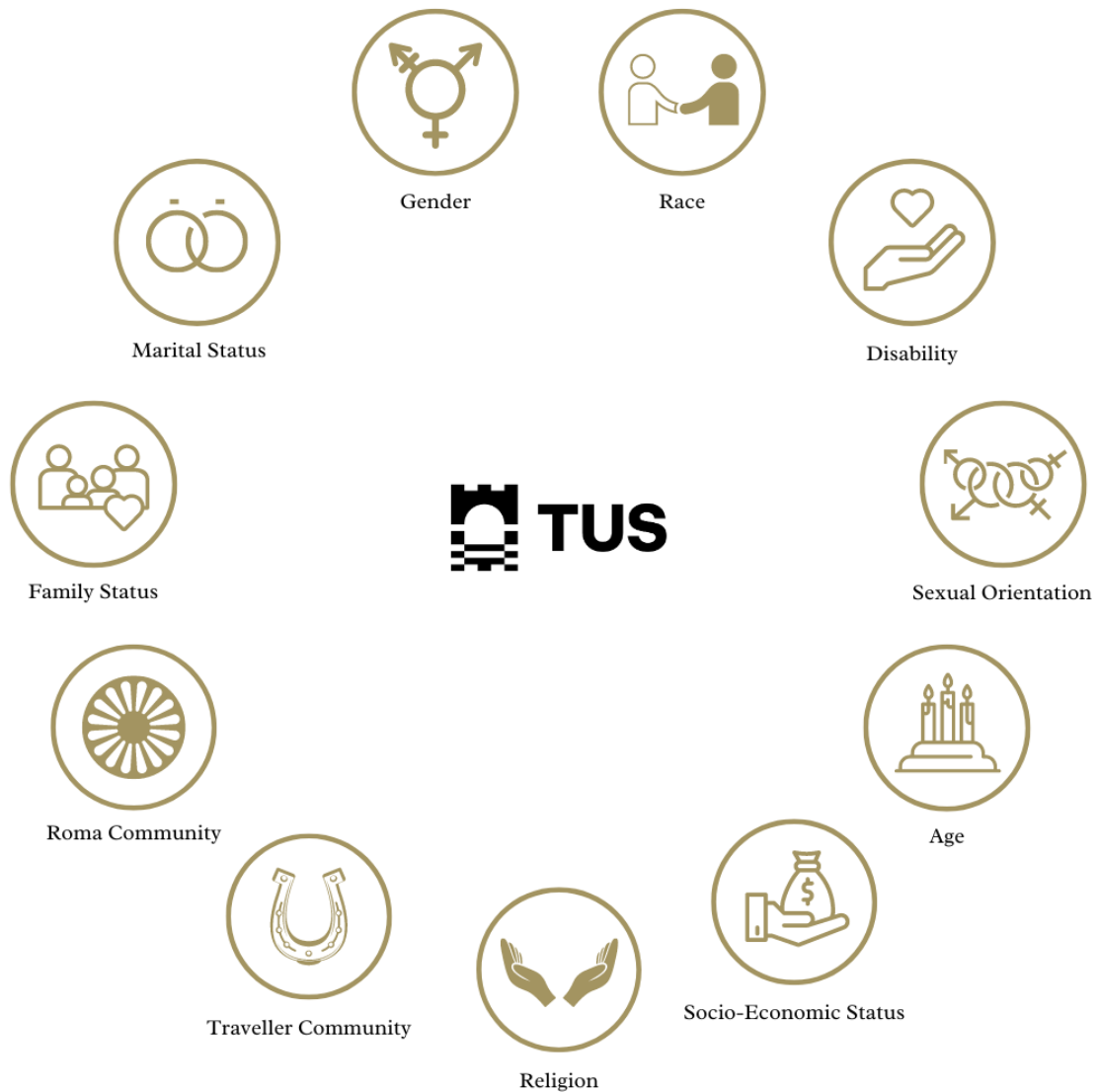
Inclusion is promoting and sustaining a sense of belonging, feeling respected and valued; feeling supported so that all members of the community of TUS can achieve their best at work and study. It is a culture where people regardless of their gender, age, race, sexual orientation, civil status, socio-economic status, family status, disabilities, religion or ethnicity, are respected and appreciated as full and equal members of the University community.

Values of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 1) We strive to build **Community** through Partnership and developing Connections.
- 2) We foster **Growth** through Collaborative Learning and Reflection.
- 3) We advocate for Fairness of Treatment, Social Responsibility, **Equity** of Opportunity and Equal Access for all, taking an intersectional lens through all our activities.
- 4) We promote working with **Empathy** through being Accepting, Respectful and Understanding of individual needs and differences.
- 5) We aim for **Authenticity** through being Research Led and Transparent to impact change.

What are the Equality Grounds?

The Employability Equality Acts and Equal Status Acts in Ireland prohibit direct and indirect discrimination across nine equality grounds. TUS has included socio economic status and the Roma community as additional equality grounds. TUS is committed to discharging its obligations across these equality grounds.





Gender

A person's gender identity including male, female, transgender or non-binary.



Race

Includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.



Family Status

Being pregnant or a parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability.



Marital or Civil Status

A person's marital or civil status be they single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnered or formerly civil partnered.



Religion

A person's religious belief, background, outlook or having none of the above.



Sexual Orientation

A person's sexual orientation including gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual.



Age

A person's age (this does not apply to people under 16).



Disability

Includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions.



Traveller Community

An ethnic group with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.



Roma Community

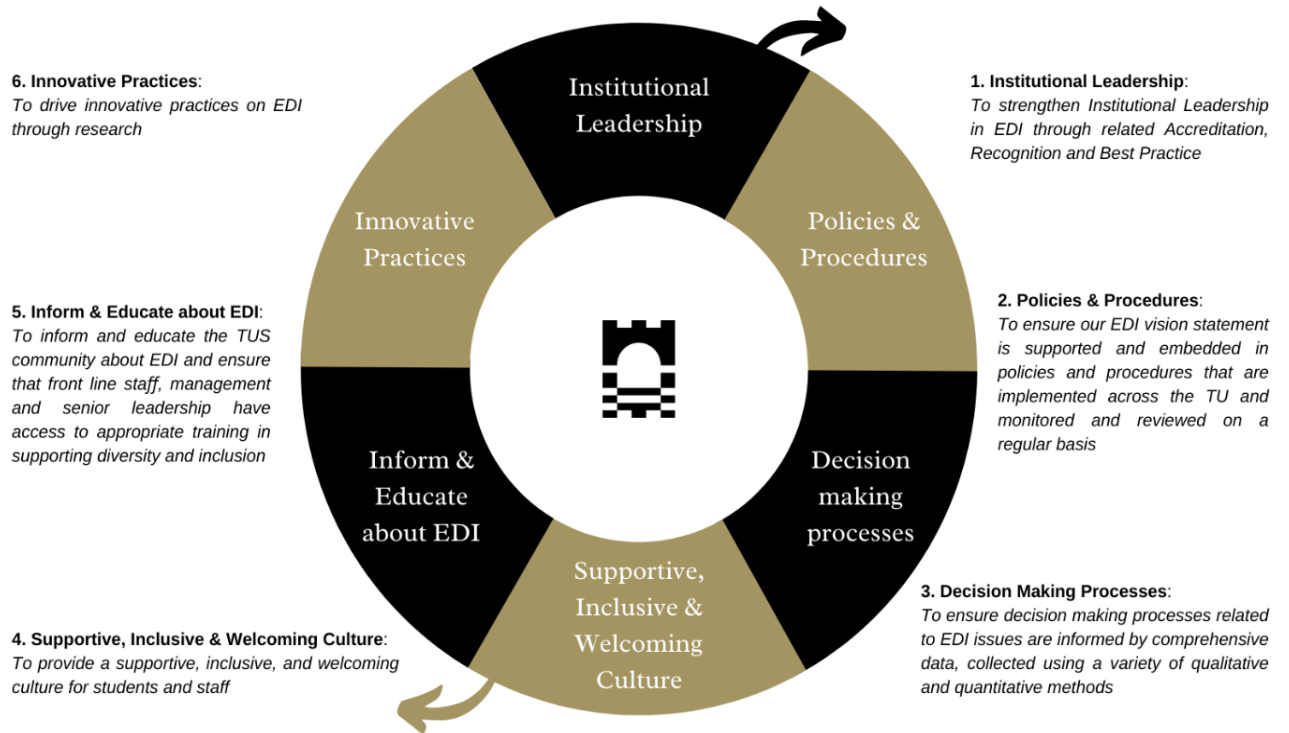
An ethnic group who have lived for centuries mainly in eastern and central Europe. The Council of Europe estimates there are 10-12 million Roma in Europe.



Socioeconomic Status

The combined economic and sociological measure of economic and social position in relation to others, based on the income, education and occupation of an individual and their family.

Summary of EDI Strategic Goals 2023-2026



Strategic Goal 1: To strengthen Institutional Leadership in EDI through related Accreditation, Recognition and Best Practice.

- Action 1.1: Address under-representation in decision-making structures and committees. Develop guidelines / establish targets in relation to committee membership and diversity representation.
- Action 1.2: Apply for EDI related awards and recognition in areas relevant to nine equality grounds: implement, regularly review, and monitor associated action plans.
- Action 1.3: Play an active role in EDI National Committees, network with our counterparts in other third level institutions and organisations and engage with Higher Education Authority
- Action 1.4: Implement the Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty
- Action 1.5 Engage and contribute to the development and subsequent implementation of new national plans and strategies relevant to EDI.
- Action 1.6: Identify opportunities for collaboration with external bodies and organisations on EDI initiatives (including providing support for under-represented groups), and to engage with those that have demonstrated leadership in this area.

Strategic Goal 2: To ensure that our vision statement for EDI is supported and embedded in policies and procedures for staff, students and stakeholders that are implemented across TUS and monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

- Action 2.1: Review, develop, communicate and implement relevant policies to EDI.
- Action 2.2: Use equality impact assessments (EIA) to integrate EDI considerations into other policies and procedures.
- Action 2.3: Ensure EDI related policies are accessible and available to all staff and students, where relevant

Strategic Goal 3: To ensure decision making processes related to EDI issues are informed by comprehensive data, collected using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods.

- Action 3.1: Capture data, guided by an intersectionality frame, to understand the EDI make-up of the existing employee and staff population e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status and age.
- Action 3.2: Conduct a biennial survey to collect and monitor relevant qualitative and quantitative EDI data from staff and students.
- Action 3.3: Ensure data is analysed using an intersectional frame, presented and discussed in a transparent and participatory manner at appropriate fora, including at Governing Body and Executive level, and with actions agreed to address EDI issues identified annually to Governing Body and quarterly to Executive.

Strategic Goal 4: To provide a supportive, inclusive, and welcoming culture for students and staff.

- Action 4.1: Continue to improve recruitment processes to attract employees and students from all backgrounds, and in particular employees / students from under-represented backgrounds.
- Action 4.2: Collaborate with relevant key internal stakeholders and function units (HR, Student Services, Estates) to improve physical, social and general well-being in our communities.
- Action 4.3 Support staff and students to question, challenge and report bullying, harassment, discrimination, and unfair treatment without fear of repercussion and with confidence on support for those who speak up.
- Action 4.4: Support the development and embedding of a TUS Women's Network, LGBT+ & Allies Staff Network, Parents and Carers Network, and other relevant EDI Networks.

Strategic Goal 5: To inform and educate the TU community about EDI, and ensure that front line staff, line management, and senior leadership have access to appropriate training in supporting diversity and inclusion.

- Action 5.1: Develop a Communication Strategy to inform and educate staff on EDI events, progress of EDI initiatives, and how these contributed to the achievement of the actions in the EDI Strategy
- Action 5.2: Provide specific trainings on EDI related matters for all staff.
- Action 5.3: Make training available for managers in supporting diversity and inclusion.
- Action 5.4: Review induction programmes, Continued Professional Development offerings or other training opportunities provided for staff to include a strong EDI component.

Strategic Goal 6: To drive innovative practices on EDI through research.

- Action 6.1: Support Graduate Research Office to guide researchers on embedding a strong gender/sex dimension as well as consideration of other equality grounds into research funding applications, methodologies and content.
- Action 6.2: Develop mechanisms to support Early Career Researchers (e.g. mentoring scheme, time release)
- Action 6.3: Continue to track research staff profile and take appropriate action to encourage greater participation by women and other underrepresented groups.
- Action 6.4: Support and showcase good research and best practice examples in EDI emerging from students and staff.
- Action 6.5: Seek funding for EDI and Human Rights related initiatives as appropriate.