



Meeting Hours Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the participation in the life of the University of staff with caring responsibilities.

Context

The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2016 prohibit discrimination (including indirect discrimination) on the grounds of family status in relation to conditions of employment. Family status refers to being a parent/guardian of a child/children under 18, and/or being a long-term carer of a person with a disability (or not). Trinity's Equality Policy states that "Trinity will seek to identify any barriers to full participation in University life as a student, staff member or service user, and take action to address these as appropriate."¹

Meetings held in the early morning or late afternoon/evening can act as a barrier to staff members with caring responsibilities, particularly those with children or other dependents who may need to be brought to/from school, childcare or other care venues. Trinity has specifically committed to the introduction of a "core hours" policy in its institutional Athena SWAN Gender Action Plan (2015)² and this was also recommended in *Mind the Gap! Gender Inequality in Trinity College Dublin* (TCGEL, 2017)³ and the HEA's National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions (2016)⁴.

¹ <https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/about/policies/pdfs/EqualityPolicyRevised2016.pdf> p5

² <https://www.tcd.ie/equality/athena-swan/>

³ <http://www.tcd.ie/tcgel/assets/pdf/INTEGER%20TCGEL%20Report%202017%20FINAL.pdf>, p66

⁴ <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/HEA-National-Review-of-Gender-Equality-in-Irish-Higher-Education-Institutions.pdf>, p58



Scope

This policy applies to all staff irrespective of gender, family status, paygrade or job category (i.e. academic, research, or professional)

Commitment

Trinity endorses the principle that meetings⁵ which staff are expected to attend as part of their work will, as far as possible, be held within the hours of 10.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday. It is acknowledged that these times may not be suitable for every meeting. However, meetings outside these hours should be the exception rather than the rule.

Implementation

Any staff member who is organising a meeting should make every reasonable effort to schedule the meeting starts and finishes within the times of 10.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday. Where it is not possible to hold a meeting within these hours, the meeting organiser should be prepared to provide brief justification (if requested) for holding the meeting outside these hours. Justification may relate to local shift patterns, occupational requirements, service provision, attendance of participants with external work commitments, or other factors necessary for the effective operation of university business.

Governance Bodies

Trinity is committed, as far as is possible, to holding meetings of the following governance bodies between the hours of 10.00am and 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.

- Board
- Council
- Committees of Board and Council
- Faculty Executives
- School Executives

⁵ Typical meetings covered by this policy include regularly scheduled meetings such as committee meetings, management meetings, regular research group meetings, *i.e.* decision-making and consultative meetings that deal with the core business of the unit.



Queries and Complaints

Any staff member who has a complaint about a meeting being held outside the hours of 10.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday should first contact the meeting organiser, to enquire why the meeting was held at that time.

If the staff member feels that the response received is not satisfactory, or if they receive no response, they should contact their Head of Area. All Heads of Area have a responsibility to uphold and promote this policy in their area.

Further queries about this policy should be referred to the Equality Officer.

Email: equality@tcd.ie Phone: 01 896-4352	Postal Address: Equality Officer Trinity College Dublin 2
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Review

This policy will be reviewed by the HR Committee three years from the date of its approval by Board.