



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Equality Committee Annual Report

2016-2017

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Introduction

This is the Annual Report of the Equality Committee to Board detailing activities during the 2016/17 academic year. The Equality Committee is a compliance Committee of Board with responsibility for advising Board and Council on all equality-related matters.

Legislation

The Equality Committee advises Board on legal requirements arising from The Universities Act 1997, The Employment Equality Act 1998-2015, The Equal Status Act 2000-2015, Disability Act 2005, The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 and any other relevant legislation.

The key aspects of the legislation for Trinity are:

- Trinity is to promote gender balance and equality of opportunity among students and employees of the university as one of its objectives under the Universities Act 1997.
- The Equal Status and Employment Equality Acts outlaw direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the following 9 grounds: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community. It is also prohibited under the Equal Status Act to discriminate in the provision of accommodation, in relation to the ground of “housing assistance”.
- These Acts place a responsibility on Trinity as an employer and educational establishment not to discriminate on any of these grounds against staff, students or service users; and to take reasonably practicable steps to prevent discriminatory conduct by its employees.
- The Equal Status Act and Employment Equality Act allow for preferential treatment or the taking of positive measures which are intended to promote equality of opportunity for disadvantaged persons; or cater for the special needs of persons who may require facilities, arrangements, services or

assistance. For example, training for particular groups of staff, or reasonable accommodations required by staff with disabilities.

- The Disability Act 2005 requires all public bodies to fulfil a 3% employment target of staff with disabilities, and to monitor and report on the achievement of this target annually.
- The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 states that public bodies have a positive duty to promote human rights and equality in the performance of their functions. This “public sector duty” is to be implemented by a three-step process, which is to be tied to strategic planning:
 - Conduct an assessment of human rights and equality issues that are relevant to the organisation’s functions
 - Develop an action plan for addressing the issues identified
 - Report annually on progress

Policy

Trinity’s commitment to promoting equality in all its activities is outlined in the College Equality Policy, the most recent version of which was approved by Board in January 2016.

The Equality Committee is also responsible for the review and implementation of a range of Trinity policies, including but not limited to:

- Dignity and Respect Policy (2016)
- Accessible Information Policy (2011)
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy (2014)
- Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy (2013)
- Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities (2016)
- Procedures and Guidelines in Relation to the Provision of ISL/English Interpretation (2017)

In some cases, the responsibility for review and implementation is shared with other committees / offices such as HR or the Disability Service.

Strategy

Trinity's Strategic Plan 2014-2019 lays out strategic goals for equality as follows:

C8.2 Equality, Diversity and the Irish Language

Commitments to equality and diversity are values on which Trinity's excellence relies. To this end we are committed to creating an inclusive, diverse and pluralist college community and a positive environment in which all can participate, and all are recognized fully for their contributions. We are committed on all equality grounds to protecting staff and students from discrimination and to ensuring that diversity is promoted and celebrated. We are committed to the Irish language as a central aspect of college life and as a valued element of college diversity. We will continue to support the use and promotion of the Irish language, and to improve Irish language services.

We will achieve this objective by:

- embedding the commitment to equality and diversity in all policies and practices and further developing diversity awareness and training programmes
- advancing a structural change process to incorporate gender-balanced representation at all stages and levels, thereby enhancing the quality of Trinity's institutional decision-making
- acting as a national leader to promote the introduction of the Athena SWAN Charter to Ireland and pursuing institutional and school-level Athena SWAN Awards, thereby providing a proven framework through which our position on gender equality can be measured and improved
- promoting the Equality Policy, Dignity and Respect Policy and the Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy
- promoting the employment of people with disabilities, improving their retention and recognizing their contributions
- further developing our supports and training through projects like ConnectAbility
- taking a leading role in sectoral and national initiatives to promote diversity and seeking to raise the university's profile as an inclusive organization"

Meetings

Agendas and minutes of all Equality Committee meetings are publically available at <https://www.tcd.ie/committeepapers/equality/papers/>.

The Committee meets at least twice a year, or as often as is necessary to complete the business before it. In 2016/17 the Committee met five times:

- 21 September 2016
- 5 December 2016
- 6 February 2017
- 22 March 2017
- 1 June 2017

Membership

The Membership of the Committee in 2016/17 was as follows:

Elected Board Member (Chair)	Ms Sheila Dunphy
Vice-Provost	Prof Chris Morash
Faculty Dean	Prof Mary McCarron
Secretary to the College (nominee)	Ms Sinead MacBride
Academic Secretary (nominee)	Ms Kathleen O'Toole-Brennan
Director of Human Resources (nominee)	Mr Ken O'Doherty
Director of the Disability Service	Mr Declan Treanor
Representative of the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons	Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez
Representative of Council	Prof Daniel Faas
Welfare and Equality Officer of the Students' Union	Ms Aoibhinn Ní Lochlainn
Representative of the Graduate Students' Union	Ms Elisa Crespo / Ms Sioban O'Brien-Green (joined Dec 2016)
Self-nominated member of staff	Prof Martine Cuypers

Self-nominated member of staff	Dr Sabina Brennan
Self-nominated member of staff	Mr Chuck Rashleigh (joined June 2017)
Director of the Trinity Centre for Gender Equality and Leadership (TCGEL) – in attendance	Prof Eileen Drew (joined December 2016)
Equality Officer (secretary)	Ms Aoife Crawford

Equality Officer

An Equality Officer was appointed in 2006 to advise and assist the Equality Committee, and the role was taken up by Ms Aoife Crawford in September 2015. The Equality Officer's role is to promote equality in all areas of university life for staff and students, covering all grounds of discrimination included in Irish equality legislation. The Equality Officer is secretary to the Equality Committee, and advises the Committee on matters regarding legislation and policy; as well as liaising with the different individuals and groups involved in equality-related matters in Trinity, and implementing Committee decisions. The Equality Officer is part of the Secretary's Office and reports to the College Solicitor / Information Compliance Officer.

Subcommittees & Working Groups

Equality Fund Subcommittee

- Chair of Equality Committee (Sheila Dunphy - Chair)
- Staff member of Equality Committee (Prof Martine Cuypers)
- Student member of Equality Committee (Aoibhinn Ní Lochlainn – SU Welfare Officer)
- Other member of Equality Committee (Elisa Crespo – GSU Vice-President)
- Representative of Financial Services Division (Anita Keogh)
- Equality Officer (Aoife Crawford - Secretary)

The Equality Fund is made available annually to staff and student applications on a competitive basis for a variety of equality projects within Trinity. The terms of reference and further details are available at <http://www.tcd.ie/equality/projects/equality-fund/index.php>. The Equality Fund Subcommittee selects priority themes for each application round, assesses applications and determines grants to be awarded, and advises the Equality Officer on the administration of the Fund.

The Equality Fund subcommittee met on 12 October 2016, 6 December 2016 and 3 August 2017.

Gender Equality Implementation Subcommittee

- Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer (Prof Chris Morash – Chair)
- Chair of Equality Committee (Sheila Dunphy)
- Director of TCGEL (Prof Eileen Drew)
- Director of Diversity and Inclusion (Tony McMahon)
- Director of HR / nominee (Kate Malone / David Hurcome – joined Aug 2017)
- HR Partner, ASD (Philip Coffey / vacant since August 2017)
- Equality Officer (Aoife Crawford - Secretary)

The function of this subcommittee is to oversee and co-ordinate implementation of the actions for gender equality to which Trinity has committed (in various fora). It began as the HEA Gender Equality Review Implementation Planning Group with a specific remit to produce an implementation plan in response to the HEA's recommendations in its *National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions* (2016) – this implementation plan was approved by Board on 22 February 2017. The Equality Committee confirmed the group as the Gender Equality Implementation Subcommittee on 1 June 2017.

The group / subcommittee met on 3 November 2016, 21 November 2016, 21 January 2017, 6 April 2017 and 16 August 2017.

Equality Monitoring Advisory Group

- Clodagh Byrne (Mature Students' Officer)
- Paula Kennedy-Hogan (Deputy Director, Human Resources)
- Claire Marshall (Programme Manager, TCGEL)
- Tony McMahon (Director of Diversity & Inclusion)
- Carol Barry (Executive Officer, Disability Service)
- Aoife Crawford (Equality Officer - Secretary)

This group advises the Equality Officer on the scoping, drafting and communication of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report. Equality Monitoring Reports to Board provide statistical information on the diversity profile of the staff and student body, and on equality in processes such as admissions, recruitment and promotion.

Previous reports are available at <http://www.tcd.ie/equality/reports/annual-equality-monitoring-reports/>.

The Equality Monitoring Advisory Group met on 7 November 2016 and 4 May 2017. It conducts most of its business online.

Age-Friendly Trinity Working Group

- Equality Committee member (Chair – Prof Sabina Brennan)
- Equality Officer (Secretary)
- Director of Diversity and Inclusion (Mr Tony McMahon)
- Mature Students Officer (Ms Clodagh Byrne)
- Prof Des O'Neill, Dept of Medical Gerontology
- Representative of Trinity Retirement Association (Prof Mike Jones)
- Representative of the Students' Union (Ms Aoibhinn Ní Lochlainn)

This group's function is to drive the implementation of the "Ten Principles of an Age-Friendly University" (<http://dcu.ie/agefriendly/principles.shtml>) in Trinity. It met on 1 September 2016, 30 November 2016, 13 January 2017, and 12 June 2017.

Issues addressed by the Committee in 2016/2017

Each key area addressed by the Committee in 2016/17 is listed below, with the relevant minute reference(s). All minute references start with “Eqal/16-17/” followed by the three digits provided in brackets below.

- HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIs and Trinity’s Implementation Plan (005, 018, 034)
- Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2015/16 (007)
- Gender and Trinity Staff: Trends in Contract Types (report) (008)
- Equality Committee Annual Report 2015/16 (009)
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (010)
- Revised Guidelines for Provision of and Working with ISL Interpreters (011)
- Workplace Equality Index Awards (012)
- Proposal / Planning on gender-neutral term for “Freshmen” (017, 036)
- LGBT Staff Network (019)
- Mind the Gap: Gender (In)Equality in Trinity College Dublin (report) (020)
- Equality Impact Assessment Tool (035, 051)
- College Awareness Week (039)
- Selection of New Self-Nominated Member (041, 049)
- Travel Bans to the U.S. (042)
- Ending Sexual Harassment in Third-level Education (ESHTE) project (043)
- National Developments in Student Finances and Access (050)
- “Equality Trail” Proposal (052)
- Public Sector Duty (057)
- Review of Membership and Terms of Reference (064)
- Dignity and Respect Contact Persons (065)
- Gender Pay Audit (066)

The Committee also received regular updates from its working groups and subcommittees, updates on relevant Board activity from the Chair and updates from the Equality Officer on national / international legal and policy developments.

Committee Self-Evaluation

Introduction

On 18 May 2017, anonymous self-evaluation questionnaires (on SurveyMonkey) were circulated to all members of the Equality Committee, and 7 responses out of a potential 14 (excluding Chair and Secretary) were received.

Questions in the evaluation were positively worded – for example, “The Committee’s Terms of Reference clearly set out its role”, and respondents were invited to rate their level of agreement (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree).

Members were also invited to make additional free comments at the end of each section of the questionnaire.

Overall Assessment

The overall assessment of the Committee was positive. Of the seven respondents to the self-assessment survey, four rated the Committee as “effective” and three as “very effective”.

Particular Strengths

The majority of responses to the positive statements in the survey were “agree” or “strongly agree”. The statements with which a majority of respondents (i.e. 4 or more respondents) strongly agreed are presented below and overleaf.

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand the remit of the Committee	1	6
The Committee engages effectively with other university bodies in fulfilling its remit	2	4
The Committee is effective in developing (and updating) equality policies	2	5

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree
Agenda items are relevant to the Committee's remit	3	4
Agenda and papers are distributed well in advance of the meeting	2	5
Papers are clear and relevant to the item	3	4
Minutes accurately reflect meeting outcomes	2	5
There is adequate feedback to the Committee on its previous decisions	2	4

Positive Comments

"I feel the importance of the Committee has been elevated in recent years due to a greater understanding among the College Community of the importance of equality to all elements of our lives."

"Latterly, the absolute importance of the committee has become more apparent, in part due to the large interest in self-nominated staff to become a part of the committee, and reminders to all staff about the TOR/attendance requirements, as well as the continuous references to equality related issues in the national strategy documents and internal strategies."

"The Equality Officer and the Chair do an excellent job of arranging, managing and facilitating the Committee."

Areas for Improvement

All the statements with which one or more respondent disagreed are presented overleaf. The orange-highlighted statements are those with which more than one respondent disagreed, or with which any respondent strongly disagreed. Green-highlighted statements were also cited as strengths.

Statement	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Other areas of the university understand and respect the Committee's remit	3	
The Committee engages effectively with other university bodies in fulfilling its remit	1	
The Committee is effective in monitoring implementation of equality policies	3	
The Committee is effective in promoting good equality practice throughout the university	1	
The Committee is effective in co-ordinating the various offices involved in equality matters	1	
The Committee is effective in advising Board on relevant national and international developments	1	
The Committee is an appropriate size	1	
A wide range of university areas are represented on the Committee	1	
The Committee represents the diversity of the College community (in terms of equality grounds)	3	
The Committee has all the members it needs to fulfil its remit	3	
Members are given enough support and information to fulfil their role	1	1
Two-hour meetings are long enough	1	
Agenda items are given sufficient time	1	
All views are respectfully considered	1	
Discussion is kept to the item at hand	1	
Members are facilitated in submitting items for the agenda	1	
Papers are of reasonable length	1	

Action owners are reminded of their actions between meetings	1	
There is adequate feedback to the Committee on its previous decisions	1	

Suggestions for Improvement

All suggestions for improvement are presented below – there were no other comments of a negative nature. Need for resources and for improvements to membership are both noted.

1. Resources

“There is a real need for resources if the committee is to be effective - if the College is serious about fulfilling its equality obligations then there should be funds ring-fenced to meet equality objectives.”

“The Committee accomplishes quite a lot, but could benefit from more resources. The remit of the Equality Officer is considerable and the office could benefit from access to EO support, given the volume of work involved in updating policies and working to increase the visibility of the Equality Office through the Equality Fund, student society awards, International Women’s Week, etc. etc. Additional staffing might assist with allowing more time spent on reviewing/helping with the on-ground implementation of equality policies across all Schools/Faculties and services.”

“As with the Equality Committee there needs to be resources allocated so that these sub-committees or working groups can carry out their remit effectively.”

2. Membership

“More student representation would be helpful, if this is possible within the SU etc.”

“There is diversity among gender and age but that’s about it. I think we could draw on the experience of minority groups on campus to widen the profile.”

“Making the committee a little larger might be beneficial to broaden representation and improve attendance.”

3. Miscellaneous

“The separation between Equality and Diversity remains very awkward and causes duplication and unclarity both in governance and for how this area of activity is perceived.”

“The main issue with any committee, however, is ensuring that the conversations which we have and the work which we undertake, is visible and has a positive impact on the entire College community. This is the area which I feel needs more attention / resources.”

“I would be happy to attend more meetings if it was necessary in order for the Committee to fulfil its role.”

Suggested Actions

To fulfil its remit to advise Board and Council on equality-related matters, and having regard to the responses in its self-assessment survey, the following actions are proposed by the Equality Committee:

- Annual updates from key areas on the implementation of equality-related policies / strategies will be re-introduced. These may include:
 - Disability Service
 - Dignity and Respect Contact Persons
 - Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team / TCGEL
 - Director of Diversity and Inclusion
 - LGBT Staff Network
 - Other areas as required

- When the next available self-nominated staff member position arises, the call for applications will explicitly encourage applications from staff with characteristics that would add to the diversity of representation on the Equality Committee

- A handbook of key information on the Equality Committee will be circulated to all members at the beginning of each academic year

- Committee meetings will be made longer (they are 2 hours in duration at present) if the need arises during the year

- The Equality Officer will review the Equality Office work programme and budget in order to maximise both for greatest impact

- Committee news, minutes and key achievements will be publicised on Equality Office communications channels as appropriate

Report on 2015/16 Actions

The following actions were recommended in the Equality Committee Annual Report 2015/16:

Recommendation	Action taken / Outcome
<p>To promote attendance, Section 2.4 of the Equality Committee Terms of Reference (which states that members missing three consecutive meetings without justification deemed sufficient by the Chair should be invited to resign) is to be implemented more strictly – allowing that this action is also agreed by the Secretary’s Office, and the member has been warned of this provision after missing two consecutive meetings.</p>	<p>Section 2.4 has not been used</p>
<p>Number of Committee meetings to be increased to five in our Terms of Reference (one extra meeting has been needed in 2015/16 and in 2014/15); two meetings to be held during each teaching term, and one in Trinity term</p>	<p>Change to Terms of Reference discussed with Registrar: existing flexible provision (“The Committee will normally hold meetings once per term or as often as is necessary to complete the business before it or to deal with urgent issue that may arise”) is to remain but five meetings have been scheduled for 2017/18 from the beginning of the year</p>
<p>Membership review to be undertaken with consideration of the variety of equality-promoting bodies in Trinity, and need for diverse representation</p>	<p>Membership review undertaken in 2016/17 and recommendations (agreed by Committee at its meeting of 1 June 2017) forwarded to the Registrar</p>

<p>Equality Officer to improve communication of the Committee’s work through Equality Office channels as well as substantial engagement with the Communications Office</p>	<p>Greater activity on Equality Office social media (Facebook and Twitter) and monthly news items posted on recently redesigned website, www.tcd.ie/equality. The website has a page on the Equality Committee. Engaged with Communications on e.g. Age-Friendly Trinity, International Women’s Week</p>
<p>Draft agenda to be circulated 2 weeks in advance of meeting; legal and policy developments in Ireland and EU to be included for discussion where relevant</p>	<p>In place (Committee agendas now have a standing item on “legal and policy update”)</p>
<p>Equality Fund subcommittee to evaluate impact and consider improvements</p>	<p>Various recommendations made by Equality Fund subcommittee in annual review meeting (August 2017)</p>

Appendix – Equality Committee Terms of Reference

Approved by Equality Committee: 28th of May 2012

Approved by Board: 27th of June 2012

1. Objectives

The Equality Committee is a Committee of Board with responsibility for advising Board and Council on all equality-related matters.

2. Membership of the Committee

2.1 The Committee shall comprise:

- An elected Board member
- Vice-Provost
- Equality Officer
- Secretary to the College (or nominee)
- Academic Secretary (or nominee)
- Director of Human Resources (or nominee)
- Director of the College Disability Service
- Representative of the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons
- Welfare Officer – Students' Union
- Representative of Graduate Students' Union
- 1 Council nominee
- 1 Dean
- 2 members of staff

In determining the composition of the Committee at least 30% of the membership should be of each gender and there should be a broad representation of all staff groups in College.

2.2 The Chairperson of the Committee shall be an Elected Board Member.

2.3 Membership of the Committee shall be reviewed regularly by the Chairperson in consultation with the Registrar and changes as required shall be recommended to the Board at that time.

2.4 Attendance at Committee meetings: a member of the Committee who is absent for three consecutive meetings may be requested to resign membership unless due to illness or if the absence is approved by the Chair.

2.5 Membership of the Committee shall normally be for an initial term of three (3) years, with the possibility of an extension of a further three (3) years. The general aim is to change the membership from time to time to ensure an appropriate balance between continuity and fresh perspectives.

2.6 The Equality Officer shall act as secretary to the Committee and be responsible for the preparation and distribution of the agenda, papers, minutes and reports following consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee.

3. Meetings and Quorum

3.1 The Committee will normally hold meetings once per term or as often as is necessary to complete the business before it or to deal with urgent issue that may arise.

3.2 The quorum for meetings will be:

- The Chair and Equality Officer plus five Committee members

Or

- 50% of members plus either the Chair or the Equality Officer

3.3 The Committee may also invite any or other person to attend any meeting(s) of the Committee, as it may from time to time consider desirable, to assist the Committee in achieving its objectives.

3.4 The draft minutes of the Equality Committee shall be circulated to the Board as soon as possible for noting and/or discussion as necessary. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be available to report orally to the Board on key aspects of the proceedings of the Committee as required.

3.5 In order to aid its operation, the Equality Committee may from time to time arrange for subgroups to consider specialist issues and bring forward recommendations to the Committee.

4. Duties

4.1 Assist Board and Council in the development, co-ordination and implementation of equality policies, practices and action plans throughout College.

4.2 Advise Board and Council on the legislative requirements in relation to equality matters, with particular reference to the Universities Act 1997, the Employment Equality Act 1998-2010, the Equal Status Act 2000-2010 and any other relevant legislation.

4.3 Monitor developments in national and EU policies in relation equality and advise Board and Council on the implications for College.

4.4 Review on an on-going basis the implementation of (a) approved recommendations and actions and (b) equality legislation and report accordingly.

4.5 Review College practices and policies from an equality perspective and where necessary make recommendations on any issues arising in order to promote good practice in these areas.

4.6 Report annually to Board and Council, preferably in Hilary Term, on all equality-related matters and on the results of reviews and monitoring exercises carried out during the year.

5. Authority

5.1 The Committee shall operate under delegated authority from the Board, which is ultimately responsible for all matters relating to equality. The Equality Committee will have devolved authority to decide on behalf of Board to:
Appointment of Contact Persons in relation to Dignity and Respect
Approving procedures and guidelines for the implementation of Equality-related policies.

5.2 The Committee may consider/review any matter falling within its terms of reference, calling on whatever resources and information it considers necessary to do so.

5.3 The Committee is authorised to seek any information it requires from any employee of the College to enable it discharge its responsibilities and shall have made available to it on a timely basis all information requested from any employee in a clear, concise and well organised manner.

5.4 The Equality Committee shall carry out such other functions and take such other decisions as may be delegated to it from time to time by the Board

6. Performance Evaluation

6.1 The Committee shall, at least once a year, review its own performance and its terms of reference and shall report its conclusions and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the Board.