Equality Committee Annual Report

2017-2018

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Introduction

This is the Annual Report of the Equality Committee to Board detailing activities during the 2017/18 academic year. The Equality Committee is a compliance Committee of Board with responsibility for advising Board and Council on all equality-related matters.

Executive Summary

Equality matters, which have been core to the university's mission for many years, have continued to increase in strategic importance in 2017/18.

Progress in advancing gender equality is now part of Trinity's strategic dialogue with the HEA, and eligibility for research funding (from the IRC, HRB and SFI) will depend on achievement in the Athena SWAN gender equality charter from 2019. The Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty has begun to be implemented across the higher education sector, and Ireland has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. There is ever greater public awareness of the prevalence and effects of bullying and harassment, and equality in higher education is a regular topic in the national media. Meanwhile, the Trinity community grows ever more diverse, with its commitments to non-traditional access, and internationalisation.

Trinity is well placed to meet these challenges and opportunities, due in no small part to the fact that it has a well-established and dynamic Equality Committee, reporting directly to the university Board. There are several key equality actors across the university, all of which now come together (whether as members or in attendance) at Committee meetings. The Committee has also re-introduced regular reporting from specific interest groups such as the LGBT Staff Network and the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons. These structures ensure that Board, via the Equality Committee, is kept informed of all major equality matters affecting Trinity.

Please read on for more specific details of Equality Committee business in 2017/18.

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 to cater for the special needs of persons who may require facilities, arrangements, services or assistance. For example, this covers 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:

- o Conduct an assessment of human rights and equality issues that are relevant to the organisation's functions
- o Develop an action plan for addressing the issues identified
- o 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 2017/18 the Committee met five times:

- 4 October 2017
- 30 November 2017
- 29 January 2018
- 5 April 2018
- 24 May 2018

Membership

The Membership of the Committee in 2017/18 was as follows:

Elected Board Member (Chair)	Ms Sheila Dunphy (until 5 March 2018)
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	Dr Subhash Chandra
Welfare and Equality Officer of the Students' Union	Mr Damien McClean
Representative of the Graduate Students' Union	Ms Haleigh York (4 Oct and 30 Nov) / Ms Shaz Oye (5 Apr and 24 May). Mr

	Madhav Bhargav was acting GSU representative on 29 Jan.
Self-nominated member of staff	Prof Martine Cuypers
Self-nominated member of staff	Dr Sabina Brennan
Self-nominated member of staff	Mr Chuck Rashleigh
Director of the Trinity Centre for Gender Equality and Leadership (TCGEL) – in attendance	Prof Eileen Drew
Director of Diversity and Inclusion – in attendance	Mr Tony McMahon
Equality Officer (secretary)	Ms Aoife Crawford

The Vice-Provost was Acting Chair for the meetings of 29 January, 5 April and 24 May 2018. Ms Dunphy resigned from Board on 5 March 2018.

At the end of 2017/18, Prof Martine Cuypers reached the end of her membership term and Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez stepped down as representative of the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons.

The Committee have noted their sincere thanks to Ms Dunphy, Prof Cuypers, Prof Arnedillo-Sánchez and Ms York for their contributions to the Committee.

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 (Damien McClean – SU Welfare Officer)
- Other member of Equality Committee (Haleigh York / Shaz Oye – GSU Equality and Diversity Officer)
- Representative of Financial Services Division (Anita Maria 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 16 November 2017 to assess applications, and all other business was conducted by email.

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 (David Hurcombe)
- 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. It prepares a biannual report to Board on the implementation of Trinity's gender equality commitments.

The group / subcommittee met on 20 November 2017, 6 March 2018 and 7 June 2018.

Equality Monitoring Advisory Group

- Clodagh Byrne (Mature Students' Officer)
- Luke Fitzgerald (Activity Lead, Academic Registry)
- Paula Kennedy-Hogan (Deputy Director, Human Resources)
- Claire Marshall (Programme Manager, TCGEL)
- Tony McMahon (Director of Diversity & Inclusion)
- Caroline Morgan (Office Manager, 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 to scope the 2017/18 Annual Equality Monitoring Report on 21 May 2018, and conducted further 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 (Mr Damien McClean)

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 14 May 2018 and conducted further business by email.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy Review Group

- Equality Committee member (Chair)   **Tony McMahon**

- Student representative on Equality Committee   **Haleigh York (GSU)**

- LGBT Rights Officer of Students' Union   **Noah O'Brien**

- Chair of QSoc   **Kyle Chambers**

- Chair of LGBT Staff Network **Joel McKeever**

- Director of HR (nominee) **Gwen Turner**

- Director of Student Services (nominee) **Niall Kirrane**

- Equality Officer (secretary) **Aoife Crawford**

Minor changes are required to the Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy due to changes in national legislation and in Trinity procedure since its approval in 2014. This is also an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the policy as a whole, with input from key stakeholders. This specific-purpose working group is responsible for producing a draft revised policy for the approval of the Equality Committee, along with advice for its future implementation.

Public Sector Duty Subcommittee

- Equality Committee member (Chair) - Sinead MacBride

- President of Students' Union / nominee

- Academic Secretary / nominee

- Director of Student Services / nominee

- Commercial Director / nominee

- Director of HR / nominee

- Dean of Research / nominee

- Director of Diversity and Inclusion

- Equality Officer (secretary)

This group is being established to conduct an initial assessment of the human rights and equality issues relevant to Trinity's functions, and identify the policies and practices that are in place or that will be put in place to address these issues. Trinity's main functions for the purpose of this exercise are education, student services, visitor services, research, and employment. The assessment and action plan must feed into the next Strategic Plan and the group will liaise with the Office of the Vice-Provost in this regard. The group will be responsible for long-term monitoring of human rights and equality issues and the implementation of any agreed actions, and are to publish an annual report on Trinity's progress with the Duty.

Issues addressed by the Committee in 2017/2018

Each key area addressed by the Committee in 2017/18 is listed below, with the relevant minute reference(s). All minute references start with "Eqal/17-18/" followed by the three digits provided in brackets below.

- Annual Update from LGBT Staff Network (006)
- Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2016/17 (007)
- Equality Committee Annual Report (008, 048)
- Progress Report on Implementation of Trinity Gender Action Plan (013)
- Report on Survey of Family-Friendly Working Practices (014)
- Cultural Diversity Working Group (015)
- Recommendations of "Learning to Build New Lives" Equality Fund project (016)
- Proposal to Pilot EIA Process on Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy (017)
- Dignity and Respect Contact Persons (020, 044)
- Access Update (022)
- Accessibility of Trinity Website (023)
- Athena SWAN (032, 047)
- Employment of People with Disabilities: Report to the HEA (033)
- Accessible Information Policy Review (034)
- Gender-neutral Term for First- and Second-year Students (035)
- Government Taskforce on Gender Equality in Higher Education (036)
- Ireland's Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (037)
- Equality Communications (045)
- Equality Committee Subgroups (046)

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 29 May 2018, anonymous self-evaluation questionnaires (on SurveyMonkey) were circulated to all members of the Equality Committee, and 9 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.

The section headings of the survey were "Remit", "Functions", "General", "Meetings", "Before and After Meetings", "Subcommittees and Subgroups" and "Overall Evaluation".

Overall Assessment

The overall assessment of the Committee was positive. Of the nine respondents to the self-assessment survey, three rated the Committee as "effective" and five as "very effective".

Strengths

The statements for which there were no "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" responses are presented below. Those for which the most popular answer was "Strongly Agree" (or an equal split between "Strongly Agree" and "Agree") are shaded green to highlight that they are a particular strength, according to the survey results.

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand the remit of the Committee	3	6
Minutes accurately reflect meeting outcomes	2	6
The Committee is effective in developing (and updating) equality policies	3	5
Meetings start and finish on time	4	4
Papers are clear and relevant to the item	4	4
A wide range of university areas are represented on the Committee	5	3
All views are respectfully considered	5	3
Meeting venues are satisfactory	5	3
Members are facilitated in proposing items for the agenda	5	3
Agenda items are relevant to the Committee's remit	5	3
Agenda and papers are distributed well in advance of the meeting	5	3
The Committee is effective in advising Board on equality matters within Trinity	5	2
The Committee meets often enough	6	2
It is clear what action is expected of the Committee in relation to each item	6	2
Papers are of reasonable length	6	2
All subcomittees / working groups fulfil an important purpose relevant to the Committee's remit	6	2
The Committee is effective in advising Board on compliance with equality legislation	6	1
Agenda items are given sufficient time	7	1
Agendas cover all necessary business	7	1
The work of subcommittees / working groups is effectively reported to the Committee	7	1

The Committee is effective in advising Board of relevant national and international developments	7	0
There is adequate feedback to the Committee on its previous decisions	8	0
The membership of subcommittees / working groups is appropriate	8	0

Possible Areas for Improvement

No "Strongly Disagree" response was received to any positive statement. All positive statements which received at least one "Disagree" response are presented below in approximate priority order; those which received more than one "Disagree" response are highlighted orange at the top of the table.

It must be noted that in all but one case ("Everyone who should be on the Committee, is on the Committee"), a majority of members still agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Both the positive and negative responses to these statements have been taken into account in drafting suggested actions.

Statement	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Everyone who should be on the Committee, is on the Committee	4	3	0
Other areas of the university understand and respect the Committee's remit	3	5	1
The Committee reflects the diversity of the Trinity community (in terms of equality grounds)	3	5	0
Committee membership changes often enough to ensure fresh perspectives	2	6	0

Action owners are reminded of their actions between meetings	1	6	0
Discussion is kept to the item at hand	1	6	1
It is clear at the end of each item what conclusion has been reached	1	6	1
The Committee is kept up-to-date of developments between meetings	1	6	1
Subcommittees / Working groups function effectively	1	6	1
The Committee fulfils its remit effectively	1	5	2
The Committee is effective in promoting good equality practice throughout the university	1	5	2
Members are given enough information and support to fulfil their role	1	5	2
The Committee is effective in monitoring implementation of equality policies	1	4	3
The Committee is effective in bringing together the various university offices involved in equality matters	1	4	3
All members have the opportunity to speak	1	4	3

Comments

The free comments made by members at the end of each survey section are provided below (except those which relate to the survey itself, which have been noted for next year's survey).

These tend to elaborate upon negative feedback within the quantitative element of the survey, or provide suggestions for improvement that were not addressed by the survey questions.

Some minor edits, of spelling only, have been made.

Remit

"Beyond those individuals directly involved in feeding into Trinity equality policies, little is known about Trinity's equality policies never mind the work of the various committees, including the equality committee"

"connection to college community and EC role could be improved and act as a place to bring equality issues of town hall type meetings held"

"I think the committee does the best it can with the resources that it has however I do believe that some areas are more 'equal' than others - by this I mean that the energies and resources of the equality committee are not distributed evenly across all 9 grounds - While gender equality is hugely important so too are the other grounds. I also wonder whether even committee members are fully convinced of the importance and relevance of some of the grounds"

Functions

"monitoring needs attention and like all college policies not properly implemented at all levels"

"I think the Equality Committee, if it had adequate resources could do more to promote good equality practices throughout the university"

General

"As with all aspects of Equality in College - this is under-resourced" [the "General" section relates to membership and support for members]

"I am satisfied that the interests of postgrads across all 9 grounds are covered as it is the role of GSU EDO to cover all grounds."

"Racial / ethnic diversity on the committee is low."

Meetings

"Sometimes one is playing catch up, but I think it is reasonable for committee members to take responsibility for updating themselves about matters on which they have not been fully briefed"

"Chair should be VP or a senior Board member and always ensure to use accessible venues"

Before and After Meetings

No comments.

Subcommittees and Subgroups

"The membership of sub-committees that the GSU has been involved in has been appropriate."

"equality fund sub group terms of reference need updating and criteria reviewed"

"Sub-committees and working groups are under-resourced if they are to be efficient and effective some resources need to be put behind it - often difficult to get people

to commit to the work required and to attend meetings due to regular work commitments"

Overall Evaluation

"The GSU is happy to support the EC and believes that the EC is both necessary and useful for highlighting equality policies, maintaining forward progress, and keeping equality issues on the university's agenda. Much of the work on the ground is done by Trinity's equality officer, and we would like to commend her for that."

"My main issue is with the lack of resources I believe the equality officer does an excellent job but has a huge remit that possibly requires more resources human and otherwise"

Further Suggestions

"Given the national/sectoral remit and demands, the Committee needs more teeth and to be more proactive"

"GSU supports and endorses Trinity equality policies, but the majority of students on the ground are disengaged with equality matters. Visibility is key. It would be useful to run an ad/information campaign around basic equality policies, so that everyone on campus knows that they are in a safe, liberal and progressive space and that they have to respect that."

Discussion

In discussion of the findings of the Committee self-evaluation at the Committee meeting of 15 October 2018, members agreed that the report should also note the Committee's need for **reliable, easily available data** to progress its aims.

This matter will be further progressed by the Equality Committee and Equality Officer in 2018/19.

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:

1. When the next available self-nominated staff member position arises, the call for applications will explicitly encourage applications from staff of ethnic minority background

2. A particular focus of the Equality Office in 2018/19 will be to raise awareness of policy, and encourage implementation, through communications and training

3. The Committee will commit to **always** using accessible venues and will encourage other Committees to do so once the new (accessible) boardroom in the Trinity Business School is open

4. Equality Fund criteria and Terms of Reference will be reviewed

5. The Vice-Provost will work closely with the new Committee Chair to progress equality matters in the university

Report on 2016/17 Actions

The following actions were recommended in the Equality Committee Annual Report 2016/17:

Recommendation	Action taken / Outcome
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	Updates have been re-introduced. Dignity and Respect Contact Persons, TCGEL and the LGBT Staff Network have reported to date.
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	No such vacancy arose in 2017/18, but this action has been carried forward to 2018/19, specifying the particular need for ethnic diversity on the Committee
A handbook of key information on the Equality Committee will be circulated to all members at the beginning of each academic year	Handbooks were given to new members in 2017/18 and will be circulated to all members in 2018/19

Committee meetings will be made longer (they are 2 hours in duration at present) if the need arises during the year	Longer meetings were not necessary in 2017/18
The Equality Officer will review the Equality Office work programme and budget in order to maximise both for greatest impact	Equality Office work programme was reviewed for 2017/18 and the full budget has been spent
Committee news, minutes and key achievements will be publicised on Equality Office communications channels as appropriate	Key news items have been posted on www.tcd.ie/equality but further work is needed on social media

Appendix – Equality Committee Terms of Reference

Approved by Equality Committee: 4 October 2017

Approved by Board: 18 October 2017

1.   Objectives

The Equality Committee is a Compliance Committee of Board and Council 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 Disability Service

Representative of the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons

Welfare and Equality Officer – Students' Union

Representative of Graduate Students' Union

1 Council nominee

1 Faculty Dean

2 members of staff

Director of the Trinity Centre for Gender Equality and Leadership (in attendance)

Director of Diversity and Inclusion (in attendance)

A member of staff to act as notetaker (in attendance)

In determining the composition of the Committee no more than 60% of the membership should be of any one 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 issues 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 polices, 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 1998-2015, the Equal Status Act 2000-2015, the Disability Act 2005, the Public Sector Duty articulated in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, and any other relevant legislation.

4.3   Monitor developments in national and EU policies in relation to 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 in College and report to Board 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, preferably in Hilary Term, on 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.