



Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Assessment and Action Plan 2025 - 2030

1. The Context

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (the Act), also known as the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, (the Duty) places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of its members, those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work.

Under Section 42(2) of the Act public bodies are obligated to Assess, Address, and Report on eliminating discrimination, promoting equality, and protecting human rights for staff and service users. This document sets out the University's approach to its obligation of assessing the key human rights and equality considerations relevant to its role as a University, employer and public body.

2. Measures in Place

As part of the preparation of the Public Sector Duty Statement (the Statement), an analysis was undertaken of the University's core functions and noted that the Duty impacted on all of the functions identified.

The Statement also set out details on the equality infrastructure and services in place which supported the University meeting its obligations with regard to the Duty. These included dedicated resources supported by a framework of policy and governance, data collection and monitoring, action planning and monitoring, training, Staff networks and champions and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Fund.

Link to the Statement: [Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty - Secretary's Office | Trinity College Dublin](#)

3. Trinity College Dublin's Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030

Section 42(2) is a strategic duty and requires the University to include human rights and equality in the University's overall strategy, planning and reporting cycles and to publish specific documents.

Trinity College Dublin's Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030, Thrive, sets out the University's mission to provide a high-quality pluralist education, rooted in academic freedom and enriched by research and diversity. The Strategic Plan specifically calls out important



responsibilities and includes a specific statement on the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty:

“Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, also known as the **Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty**, places a statutory obligation on public bodies, such as Trinity, to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of its members, those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work. As a values-led organisation, we embrace our Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty obligations. Underpinned by data, consultation and feedback, we will use this as a lens to identify opportunities and take action to embed a culture of equality, inclusion and respect for human rights across our community and in how we work. Our **Athena Swan Charter** commitments also underpin this.”

As our Strategic Plan states, values matter and they are key to the success of our Plan:

“We centre our behavioural values around the importance of *belonging*. We recognise that the university will thrive by each of us *respecting and caring* for one another. We know we can achieve much more through working *together*. We know too that we must *take responsibility* for our actions and be accountable. We must, and will never stop, *imagining*. And through being *nature positive* we connect not just with the environment but with our ambitions for a sustainable future.”

Link to the Strategy: [Trinity Strategic Plan 2025–2030](#)

4. The Assessment and Action Plan

4.1 Strategic Plan 2025-30

As part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan Implementation Group has developed a set of Outcomes to support delivery of the commitments contained within Thrive, our Strategic Plan 2025-30. Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 are Outcomes deemed relevant to the delivery of the University’s Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and the associated action plan.

Importantly, implementation of action plans identified for Outcomes will require consideration of the University’s obligations under the Duty, give due consideration to equality and human rights issues, and take steps to address the in line with s. 42(1) of the Act which places a duty of process and ongoing functional duty on the University.

4.1.1 A new model for lifelong learning

Trinity’s lifelong learning provision is fragmented and lacks the comprehensive, integrated, agile and resilient structures and policies needed to meet the evolving needs of contemporary learners and Ireland’s National Skills Strategy. Trinity’s



academic domain knowledge and expertise are not easily accessible in forms other than traditional undergraduate or postgraduate degree programmes.

Action Plan

1. Roll out of flexible, scalable, and learner-centred modular offerings based on an integrated and targeted approach
2. Targeted expansion of lifelong learning participation by under-represented groups (including care-experienced, disabled, socio-economically disadvantaged, mature and ethnic minority learners) enabled by flexible modes (part-time/online/blended), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL), bursaries and aligned to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles as appropriate.

4.1.2 An extended Access Programme

Despite a proactive approach in Trinity, barriers to education persist for under-represented groups, particularly those identified in the Higher Education Authority's National Access Plan 2022-28: socioeconomically disadvantaged students, students who are members of Irish Traveller and Roma communities, and students with disabilities – including intellectual disabilities. Flexible pathways for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are not widely available, limiting the range of potential students who want to study here.

Our student support services are of high quality but are not fully integrated. A more holistic interpretation of access must be woven through our governance, strategy, curriculum development, and service delivery.

Action Plan

1. 25% Access target achieved in line with the Higher Education Authority National Access Plan 2022-28 commitments
2. Improved retention, progression and completion rates for under-represented groups
3. Universal design principles embedded and campus accessibility retrofits advances
4. National recognition through delivery of core Trinity Access Programme (TAP), Disability, and Outreach Key Performance Indicators(KPIs).

4.1.3 A fully-supported student journey

Over the past 10 years, significant student growth combined with increasingly complex and interconnected student needs, underscores the importance of continuously reviewing and enhancing student support services.



Action Plan

1. Supports are co-designed with students through standing advisory groups and transparent feedback loops.
2. A “no-wrong-door” ecosystem across the disAbility Service, Counselling, Access, Global, Library, Careers, and Estates.

4.1.4 A socially-connected university

Social-connection and a sense of belonging can serve as significant protective factors for mental wellbeing and contribute to higher life satisfaction as well as personal and academic success.

As the University expands and becomes more diverse, maintaining a sense of belonging and connection among students is more challenging.

Students, including those from widening participation backgrounds, express a strong desire for greater connection, inclusion, and opportunities to have their voices heard.

Action Plan

1. Identify and Implement Research Based Recommendations to support expanded student engagement, increased community building events and improved use of campus indoors and outdoors.
2. Map & critique existing initiatives (e.g., volunteering, diversity initiatives, accelerator programmes) that support student connection.
3. Co-create & Co-design a Student Participation & Belonging Charter
4. Peer-Led Innovation Challenge - Launch a student-led challenge to generate ideas for enhancing belonging and participation in societies and clubs. (Y1-Y3)
5. Improve Access to Shared Spaces - Partner with the CSC to streamline processes (linked to Commitment 5.3). (Y1-Y2)

4.1.5 A workplace that is easy to navigate

Many of our corporate and administrative processes are overly complicated and onerous for people in Trinity to navigate. We need to simplify our existing processes, while new processes are kept as simple as possible, making the best use of innovation and technology. In turn, that the information we share is clear and easy to understand for all.

Action Plan

1. A Trinity Framework to enable a culture of Creativity, Innovation, Simplification and Impact.
2. Make better use of technology through our Digital Transformation work, to simplify and optimise key HR and other administrative processes. This will



make it easier and quicker for staff, especially managers and those involved in recruitment, to complete required administration, allowing more time to focus on core activities in pursuit of our mission.

4.1.6 A workplace where values are fully lived

Values are central to the success of this Strategic Plan. They fuel the mission and vision by binding colleagues together around a common purpose and underpin our commitment to enabling the culture and conditions that allow our staff to thrive, so that together we can collectively make positive and lasting change through the advancement of knowledge and discovery.

Action Plan

1. Engagement survey launched to establish a robust baseline,
2. Values awareness campaign developed and co-created with the College community, including a rollout plan and implementation toolkit of supports.
3. Rollout a campaign with the College community.

4.2 University Athena Swan Action Plan

As noted in the Strategic Plan 2025-30, the University's Athena Swan Charter commitments also support the University in identifying opportunities to take action and embed a culture of equality, inclusion and respect for human rights across our community and in how we work.

The University is supported by an institutional Athena Swan Action Plan 2023 – 2028. An overall objective has been identified:

1. Continue our work to support inclusive gender equality across the University.

The following actions have been identified from the Athena Swan Action Plan 2023-2028 as critical to the University delivering its obligations under the Duty:

2. Enhance data collection and disclosure rates for diversity data, including ethnicity, to enable target setting and to support better gendered and intersectional understanding and analysis.
3. Increase the accessibility of key EDI training offerings across several parameters, including provision of Irish Sign Language to English interpretation.

4.3 Policy

Embedding EDI principles through policies and procedures is essential for the University to demonstrate support as well as supporting the University delivering on its obligations under the Duty.



The following relevant policies and procedures are in place:

- Accessible Information Policy and Guidelines
- Code of Practice applying to the Employment of People with Disabilities
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Employment Equality Policy for Nominating Committees
- Equality Policy
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy
- Maternity Leave Policy
- Guidelines and Procedures for supporting staff who are breastfeeding May 2025
- Meeting Hours Policy
- Mental Health Policy for Students
- Parent's Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy and Procedure
- Procedures and Guidelines in relation to the provision of Irish Sign Language/English Interpretation
- Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities
- Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy

Changes were made to the Policy Record Sheet in Autumn 2025 as part of the Trinity Policy Management Framework which require the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment for new and revised existing policies.

The Policy Record Sheet includes a set of questions to prompt policy owners' consideration of the impact of the new policy or proposed revised changes. The Policy Record Sheet stipulates that consideration be given to any potential impact (direct or indirect) of the revised or new policy on staff, students, and the public under the following headings: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Disability, Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religious Belief, Membership of the Traveller Community, People at Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion. In addition, the potential for a policy to protect human rights must also be considered.

As a new requirement, further work is now required to embed and support policy owners.

Action Plan

1. Review and update equality, dignity, and accessibility policies in line with the Trinity College Dublin Policy Management Framework.
2. Ensure drafters of new or revised policies complete Equality Impact Assessments.



3. Develop information materials and pathways to support completion of Equality Impact assessments.

5. Governance and Reporting

People and Culture Committee, a Principal Committee of the Board, has delegated authority to oversee and monitor the University's ability to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. As such, an annual report will be considered by the People and Culture Committee and approved for publication on the Secretary's Office website alongside this Assessment and Action Plan and the Statement. The lifetime of this document aligns with the period covered by the Strategic Plan as section 42(2) is a strategic duty and as such is inextricably linked with the Strategic Plan.
