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## **Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin**

### **Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Statement**

#### **Introduction**

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, also known as the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, hereafter “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.

S42.2 (a) and (b) of the Act establish the steps that public bodies should follow in regard to implementing the Duty. The Duty is an ongoing obligation placed on public bodies, which must be incorporated as part of an organisation’s overall strategic planning cycle. Public bodies are also asked to account for their actions to address the human rights and equality impact of their work as it relates to members of the public, people who use their services, and their staff, in their annual report.

#### **Obligations**

##### **Section 42 (1)**

Section 42 (1) is a duty of process and an ongoing functional duty. It is the overarching statutory obligation under section 42 of the Act, which the University must comply with on an ongoing basis. It is not a one-off activity and is not separate from the performance of the University’s functions. Business processes and practises must give due consideration to equality and human rights issues and take steps to address them as part of day-to-day activity.

The Duty impacts on the University functions in many different ways. The core functions identified, but not limited to, are as follows:

- Teaching and learning
- Human Resources
- Corporate governance (including procurement)
- Promoting and conducting research
- Innovation
- Community outreach (for example, through access programmes and events)



- Support for student wellbeing
- Provision of student accommodation
- Recreational and visitor services (e.g. public cultural spaces, sports facilities, etc.)

In Trinity, some examples of how we work towards compliance with the Duty under Section 42 (1) of the Act are outlined below.

**Eliminate discrimination:** Through our policies (e.g. Dignity and Respect; Equality, Accessible Information Policy; Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy, etc.), commitment to the Athena Swan Ireland Charter, being a signatory to the Higher Education Authority Anti-Racism Principles and a member of the Age Friendly University Network.

**Promote equality of opportunity:** Through our programmes, scholarships, research, Trinity Access Programme, Athena Swan School, Unit and Institutional Action Plans, our Race Equality Action Plan, our Ending Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Action Plan, our student societies, sports facilities and programmes, staff networks, College Day Nursery, Disability Support Service, Trinity Access Programme, and Irish Sign Language/English interpreting provision.

**Protect human rights:** Through our participation in international programmes such as Universities of Sanctuary, Scholars at Risk, our research and teaching centres including, for example, the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities, Trinity Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity Centre for Forced Migration, our Global Brain Health Institute, and through our scholarship and collaborations.

## Section 42(2)

Section 42(2) is a strategic duty. It requires the University to include human rights and equality in the University's overall strategy, planning and reporting cycles and to publish specific documents. This involves a three-step approach, which requires the University, having regard to its functions, purpose, size and resources available to it, to:

- 1. Assess** - set out in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body;
- 2. Address** - set out in its strategic plan the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues;
- 3. Report** - report on developments and achievements in its annual report. The obligation to integrate the Duty in a public body's strategic plan and annual report means that assessing and addressing equality and human rights issues is an



ongoing process that should be reviewed and developed in accordance with strategic planning cycles.

Link to University's Assessment and Action Plan 2025-2030: [TCD-Public-Sector-Equality-and-Human-Rights-Duty-Assessment-and-Action-Plan-2026-FORMATTED.pdf](#)

## Values and Statement of Outcome

Trinity College Dublin is a values-driven institution. The University's Strategic Plan 2025- 2030, Thrive is underpinned by the following values:

"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."

At an organisational level, values are central to our culture, which in turn impacts on the priorities, processes, and practices of an organisation. A values-led approach to the Duty, can assist in embedding a focus on equality and human rights within the culture of an organisation and to mobilise that culture behind implementation of the Duty.

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."

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



## Statement of Commitment

The Equality Policy sets out a statement of commitment for the University:

*Trinity College Dublin is committed to promoting equality in all aspects of its activity: employment, education and service provision.*

*Trinity is committed to non-discrimination for students, staff and service users in relation to all of the nine grounds specified in equality legislation.*

*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 redress these as appropriate.*

*Trinity will take positive action measures (see appendix 1 of the policy, Definitions) to support particular groups who may be disadvantaged or under-represented in accessing education, employment or career progression where appropriate. Trinity strives to be inclusive of all in the University community and will seek to accommodate diversity in service provision where practicable.*

*These commitments can apply to groups outside the nine grounds of equality legislation.*

## Equality Infrastructure and Services

When implementing the University's obligations under the Duty, the University is supported by an equality infrastructure and services, including:

### Dedicated Resources

Trinity has a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office led by the Associate Vice Provost for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (AVP-EDI) (full-time). EDI Office has an Equality Officer (full-time), an EDI Data Analyst and Athena Swan Project Officer (full-time), a Head of EDI (full-time), a Race Equality Officer (full-time) and a dedicated Executive Officer (part-time). In addition, Trinity has a dedicated disAbility Service for students and staff, a Staff Disability Liaison Officer (full-time) and the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) support student access to higher education via a range of schemes, staff networks and other related resources.

### Policy

There are a range of policies, guidelines, and Codes of Practice relevant to Equality some of which can be described as preventative in approach with the aim of supporting the elimination of discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and treatment, and protecting human rights. The Equality Policy details implementation of



the University's responsibilities in relation to equality, monitoring and review, and signposts to relevant policies, charters and Codes of Practice.

Link to Equality Policy:

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

Link to Policies Hub: <https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/>

### **Governance**

People and Culture Committee, a Principal Committee of the Board, advises the Board on the University's obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee is a Sub-Committee of Trinity College's People and Culture Committee, with responsibility for advising the People and Culture Committee, on all EDI-related matters.

However, it should be noted that, given that the Public Sector Duty has an impact on all functions, there is no single Committee responsible for implementation of the Duty. It is a responsibility of every individual and function to embed implementation of the Duty into their work practices.

### **Data collection and monitoring**

Data is collected for Higher Education Authority and Athena Swan Annual reporting and monitoring from Human Resources and Academic Registry and via staff surveys at institutional and School level in addition to specific consultations on a range of equality areas.

Qualitative data is collected to inform EDI work across all equality grounds and in relation to Athena Swan action progress. The Office of the Associate Vice Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) runs an all-staff confidential survey every two years to collect data and feedback from staff and this information forms the basis of our Athena Swan applications. Our next all-staff survey will be launched in spring 2026.

### **Action Planning and Monitoring**

The University Athena Swan Committee, Chaired by the AVPEDI, monitors actions and progress on the Gender Action Plan. The 2023 TCD Athena Swan (AS) Gender Action Plan (GAP) is available here: [Action-Plan-2023\\_2027-TCD\\_Redacted.pdf](#). In 2025 the University launched the first Trinity Race Equality Action Plan (REAP). Each Action area or theme in the REAP connects to the Anti-Racism Principles for



Irish Higher Education Institution, the Trinity Institutional Silver Athena Swan Action Plan and maps to specific United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Link to REAP Action Plan:

<https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/equality/documents/tcd/REAP-TCD-2025.pdf>

Embedded within these action plans are actions relating to implementation of the Duty.

### **Training**

The EDI office has several online training options, as well as in person training on specific EDI areas and inclusive teaching and learning. The EDI Office collaborates with HR Learning and Organisation Development to offer workshops throughout the academic year for staff in relation to EDI areas of interest. The Centre for Academic Practice (Trinity Teaching and Learning) provides a range of professional development for all academic staff on universal design for learning (UDL): this includes a UDL Hub of open access resources (<https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/inclusive-curriculum/>), an annual Symposium and an open UDL course with a digital badge awarded by the National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning/HEA. UDL also constitutes a core underpinning strand of the Centre's Special Purpose Certificate in Academic Practice, which is a postgraduate qualification offered to all staff involved in teaching and/or supporting learning.

### **Staff Networks and Champions**

There are currently two Staff Networks in place: Trinity Staff LGBT+ Network and the Disabled Staff and Postgraduate Students Forum.

Trinity has traditionally had Athena Swan Champions in each School. The Trinity Athena Swan Champions Network meets regularly during term time to build capacity and support equality work in schools and units. Since September 2025, all Schools now have Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Directors in place, and a new institutional EDI Network is in process of establishment, bringing together the School Directors of EEDI and EDI contact points from across College (e.g. Library, Sports, Estates and Facilities, etc.).

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Fund**

The Trinity Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Fund is designed to facilitate innovative and creative equality projects by staff and students across the university which enable and promote a diverse and inclusive community. The Fund accepts applications from students and staff and encourages project proposals to align with Public Sector Duty requirements.



Link to information on the EDI Fund: <https://www.tcd.ie/equality/activities/edi-fund/>

## Projects

The Office of the Associate Vice Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Trinity EDI Office leads a collaborative new project with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Technological University Dublin and University of Galway called: Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) as Places for People: Inclusive Infrastructures to Support Intersectionality in HEIs. This project is funded under by the Higher Education Authority's competitive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Enhancement Fund 2024. The project group consortium works together to address challenges relating to in space and infrastructure in city centre or city centre adjacent located university campuses that have heritage buildings onsite, with the goal of incorporating a universal design and accessible focus into masterplans and management of these heritage spaces. Link to information on the project:

<https://www.tcd.ie/equality/news/2025/places-for-people-project-launch/>

## Reporting

Trinity completes a range of annual and occasional reports on equality matters including:

- HEA Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment Report (annual)
- HEA EDI Staffing Report (annual)
- HEA EDI report (includes specific reference to gender equality and race equality) (annual)
- Gender Pay Gap (annual)
- National Disability Authority reporting on Disability Act compliance (annual)
- National Disability Authority reporting on implementation of the Irish Sign Language Act (multi-annual, in line with ISL Act Implementation Reviews)

## Relevant Links:

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission information on the Duty:

<https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/>

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