



UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Gender Equality

Inclusive Campus

Diversity & Inclusion

Sexual Health & Wellbeing

University of Limerick Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Report 2024



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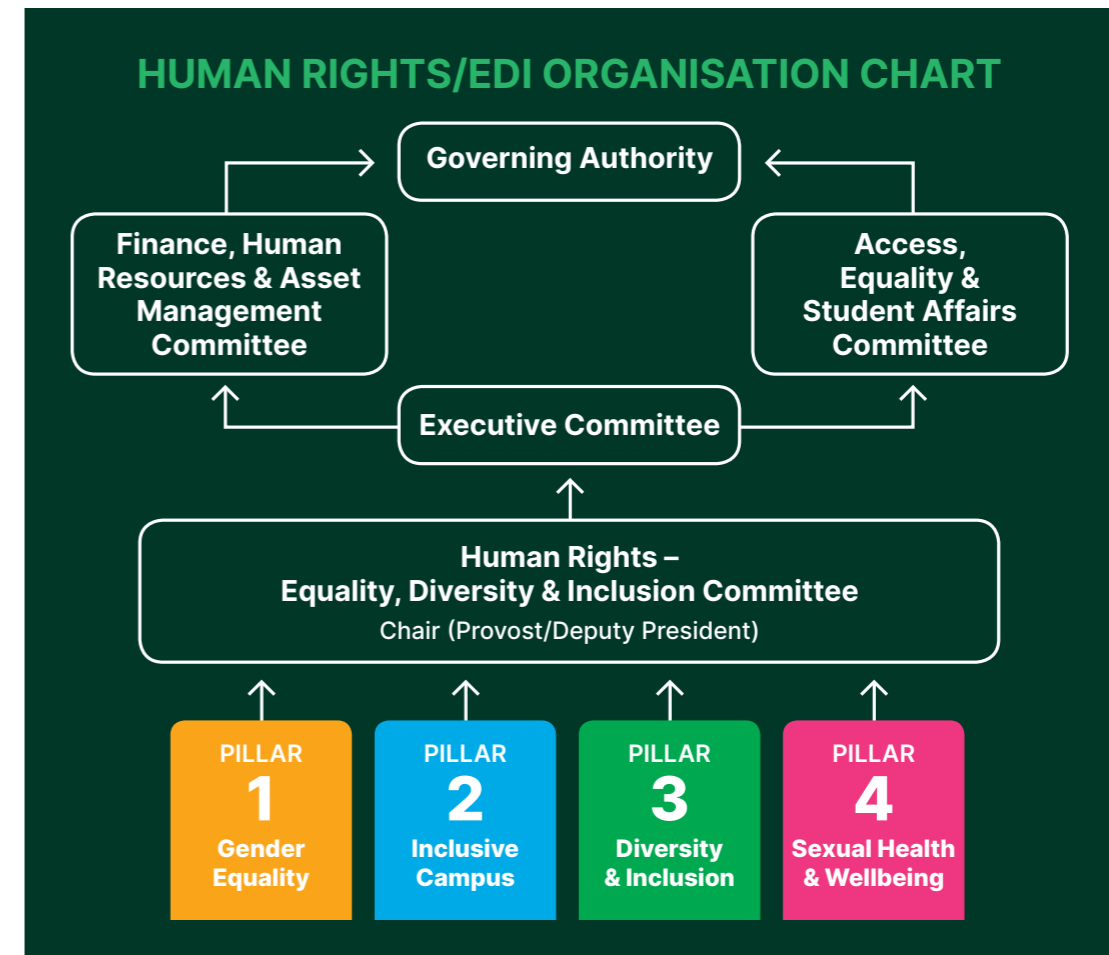
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Introduction

The creation of the Human Rights, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (HREDI) Office in March 2021 represented a significant milestone in advancing our dedication to HREDI principles. In January 2022, we restructured the HR & Equality Steering Group to the HREDI Committee with the Provost as Chair. This restructuring was designed to ensure that key decision-makers across the institution actively contributed to advancing and supporting HREDI initiatives within their areas of responsibility.

With the establishment of the office, we identified 4 key pillars for implementing HREDI within the institution; **Pillar 1 Gender Equality**; **Pillar 2 Inclusive Campus**; **Pillar 3 Diversity & Inclusion**; **Pillar 4 Sexual Health and Wellbeing**.

KPI	Baseline	2023/24 Target	Current Status	Targets 2024/25
Equality and Human Rights Strategy.	Review 2019 Equality & Human Rights Strategy. HR EDI office established. Data Analyst Recruited. New Human Rights EDI Strategy to be developed.	New Human Rights EDI Strategy 2023-2027 addressing Public Sector Duty to be approved. Action Plans developed. Increased engagement in EDI activities.	Integrated Human Rights EDI strategy in place (Dec 2023). New committee and networks established to address all components of the HREDI Strategy e.g. Staff DisAbility Network; Age Friendly University Committee; Staff LGBTQIA Network EqUL etc.	Strategy Education Awareness Campaign to be rolled out. Recognised as an Egalitarian University by 2030.



1 Gender Equality

(AS/EDI Steering Committee Chair - President)

- Faculty EDI/Athena Swan Self-Assessment Teams (x4)
- Department AS SAT (x14)
- Athena Swan Working Groups (x4)
 - Inclusivity
 - Engaging Research Staff
 - Career Development
 - Organisation Culture

2 Inclusive Campus

- Inclusive Design for Learning
- Staff DisAbility Committee
- Universal Design and Inclusive Practice @ UL (UDIPUL)
- Autism in UL Special Interest Group (SIG)
- Student Experience - Inclusive Learning
- Inclusive Recruitment

3 Diversity & Inclusion

- Ethnic Diversity Forum
- University Sanctuary Committee
- Age Friendly University Committee
- Social Class
- Global Engagement & Internationalisation at Home
- EqUL (LGTBQIA+ Staff Network)
- Out in UL LGBTI Group Staff & Student Reps

4 Sexual Health & Wellbeing

- Consent Framework Steering Committee
- Sexual Health & Wellbeing Sub Group
- Mental Health Committee
- Healthy UL - Addictive Behaviours Sub-Group



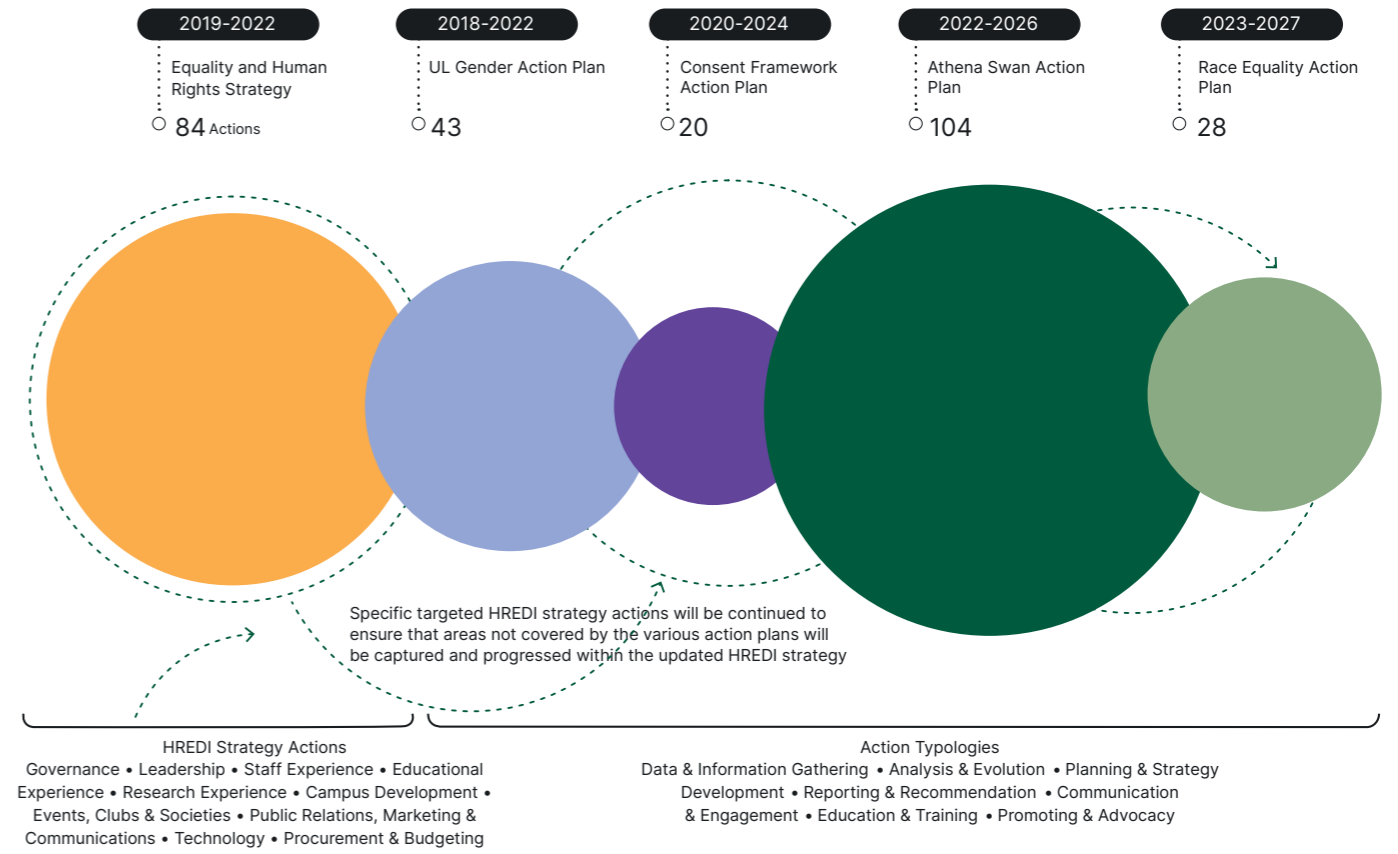


Figure 2: Action Plans aligned with HREDI strategy

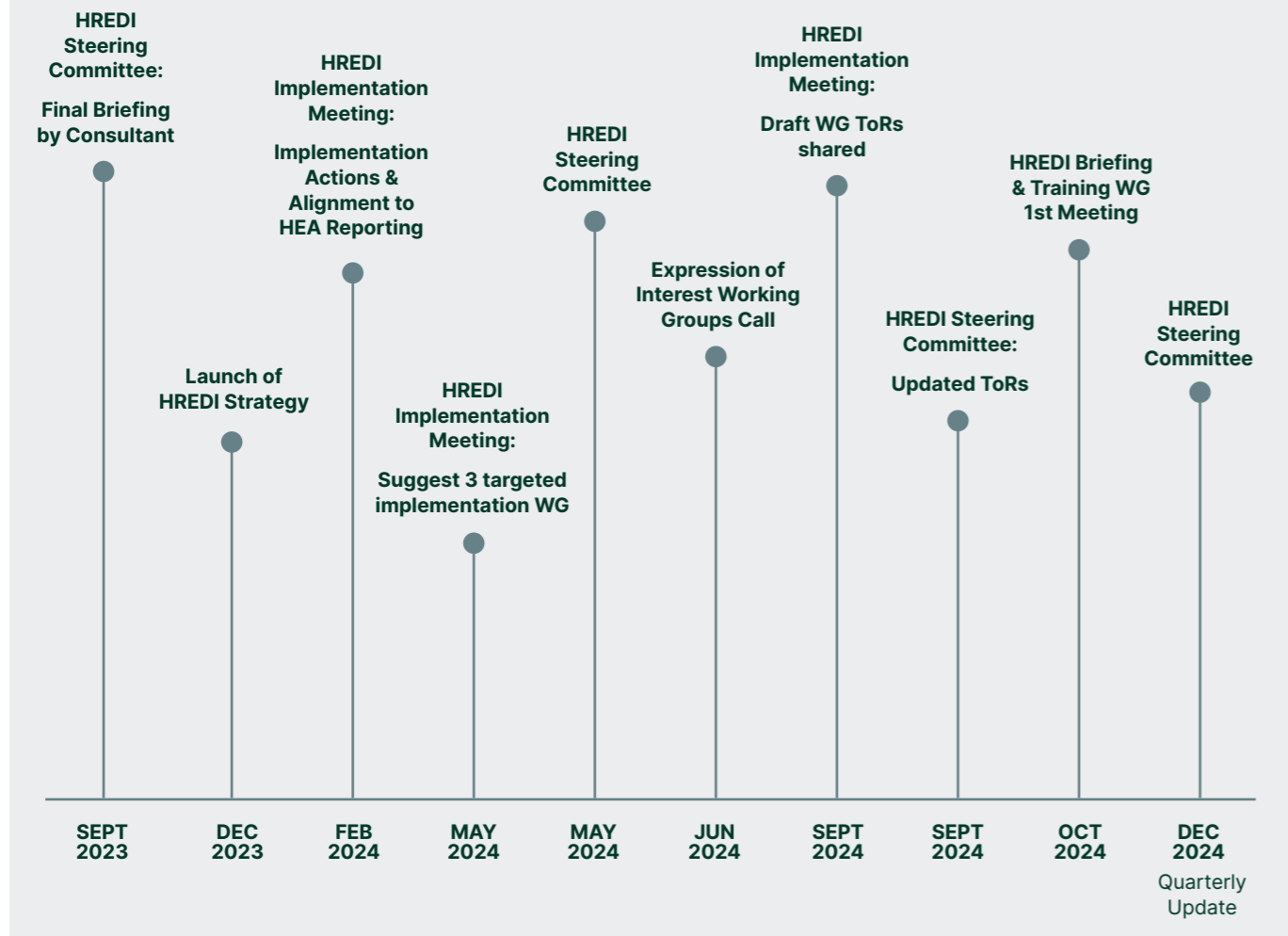


Figure 1: HREDI Strategy Timeline. Sept 2023 to Dec 2024

Pillar 1: Gender Equality

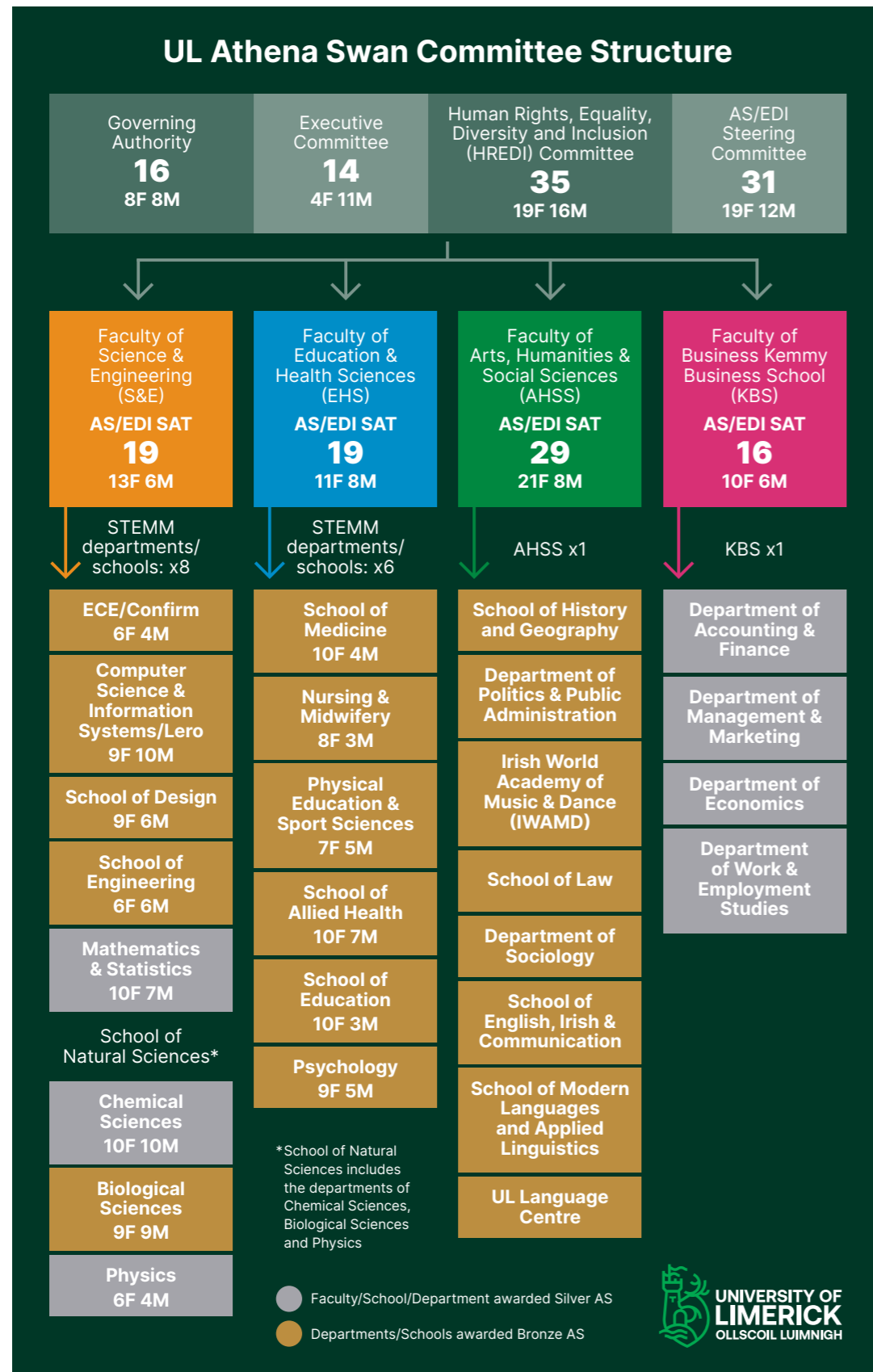


Figure 3: Athena Swan Committees in UL

Committees/Working Groups

- Athena Swan Steering Committee
- ASEDI Steering Committees x 4
- Working Groups

Athena Swan meetings held in 2024

Committee	Dates
AS/EDI Steering Committee Meetings	Wednesday 27th September 2023
	Wednesday 31st January 2024
	Tuesday 21st May 2024
	Thursday 19th September 2024
EHS EDI Committee Meetings	Thursday 5th October 2023
	Tuesday 21st November 2023
	Thursday 22nd February 2024
	Thursday 13th June 2024
FAHSS ASEDI Committee Meetings	Wednesday 20th September 2023
	Wednesday 15th November 2023
	Tuesday 5th December 2023
	Tuesday 30th January 2024
KBS ASEDI Committee Meetings	Wednesday 23rd April 2024
	Tuesday 19th September 2023
	Tuesday 16th January 2024
	Tuesday 28th May 2024
S&E ASEDI Committee Meetings	Tuesday 17th September 2024
	Tuesday 17th October 2023
	Monday 12th February 2024
	Thursday 16th May 2024
S&E ASEDI Committee Meetings	Monday 30th September 2024

Table 1: Athena Swan Meetings held in 2024



Athena Swan Actions and Progress

UL continues to build on its success within the Athena Swan framework by ensuring all academic depts now hold Athena swan awards and by encouraging depts with bronze awards to target silver awards and demonstrate the progress UL has made in gender equality.

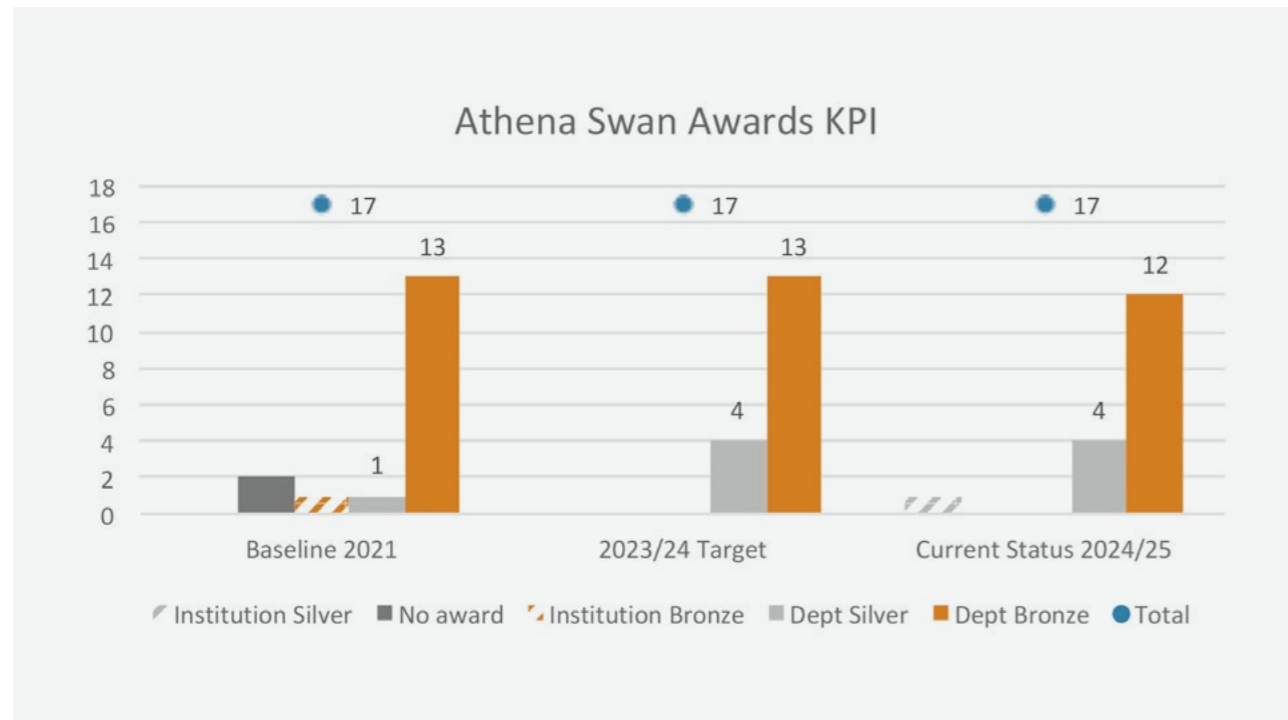


Figure 4: Athena Swan Awards HEA performance compact

Athena Swan Successes	Level	Awarded	Renewal
Department of Mathematics and Statistics	Silver	Apr-23	Apr-28
School of Design / School of Architecture (SAUL)	Bronze	Nov-23	Nov-28
Department of Chemical Sciences	Silver	Nov-23	Nov-28
University of Limerick	Silver	Nov-22	Nov-27
Kemmy Business School	Silver	Nov-22	Nov-27
School of Allied Health	Bronze (renewal)	Nov-22	Nov-27
School of Medicine	Bronze (renewal)	Nov-22	Nov-27
School of Education	Bronze	Nov-22	Nov-27

Table 2: Athena Swan Awards presented in Nov 2023/ 2024

Note all academic departments in UL now hold a bronze or silver award.

The full table of UL awards holders is available here:

www.ul.ie/equality-diversity-inclusion/athena-swan/athena-swan-award-holders

Our silver institution plan included the action to provide direct support to Chemical Sciences and Maths & Stats to help them achieve Silver department awards. Maths & Stats were awarded Silver at the presentation ceremony in UCC in November 2023. On November 19th 2024, the Athena Swan Ireland Awards Ceremony was held in the Science Gallery, Trinity College Dublin. 30 Athena Swan Ireland Award trophies were presented, including two from the University of Limerick as follows:

- Department of Chemical Sciences who achieved a Silver Department Athena Swan award. The department's initiatives in outreach, specifically targeting disadvantaged students, were especially praised.
- The School of Design who achieved a Bronze Renewal Athena Swan award. Panel feedback identified Equality, diversity and inclusion responsibilities to be included in the job descriptions of staff in leadership roles as an example of good practice.



Left (l-r): Dept of Chemical Sciences Chief Technical officer Maria Munroe, Professor Teresa Curtin, Executive Assistant Ciara Tuohy, and Associate Professor Tadhg Kennedy



Left (l-r): School of Design: Bronze Award Dr Louise Kiernan and Dr Niall Deloughry

This accomplishment marks the fourth Silver School/Department Award alongside the institution's own silver accolade. UL continues to be the leader in the sector.

Action	Status	Update
Campaign to highlight Reporting mechanism for sexual harassment.	Amber	Work progressing on implementing it in 2025.
Devise a policy on domestic abuse leave.	Green	Approved by Governing Authority on 29th October 2024.
Conduct an audit of leadership and committee membership across the additional equality grounds.	Amber	Survey working group to be established to progress this action.
Complete and implement the Support for Pregnant Students Policy.	Amber	Policy is in development.
Set up a Student Designated Contact Persons Panel (SDCPP) as a trauma-informed service.	Green	Panel being extended to cover staff as well as students.
Develop an Ethnic Diversity Forum Action Plan in line with the HEA Race Equality Implementation Plan.	Green	Action plan was launched Oct 23rd.
Conduct a disability awareness campaign and disability census.	Green	Staff census was carried out between Oct 9th and Dec 6th and provided respondents with an opportunity to identify issues that may impact on disabled users of our campus which will be taken forward by our Staff DisAbility Committee. It was also an opportunity for staff to identify if they have a disability and if so whether they wished to be contacted by HR to discuss their needs.
Roll out workshops on the proposed new WAM on a faculty-by-faculty basis.	Amber	Progress on implementing WAM system continues with training for HoDs.
Following completion of the job evaluation process, undertake a pulse survey with PMSS.	Amber	Job evaluation review underway in conjunction with HR and Staff Union.
Examine barriers to career progression for females at grades SEA to SAO3.	Red	PMSS working group to progress this action in 2025.

Figure 5: 2024 High Priority Actions

Identifier	Action
A1.2.6	Work with HR to implement a self-declaration option in the Core Personnel System & Roll out a self-declaration campaign and information sessions.
A2.4.2	Improve engagement in and monitoring of Dignity & Respect training.
A2.4.6	Roll out anti-bullying, harassment, racism, hate crime and active bystander awareness campaigns.
A2.4.5	Roll out an awareness campaign on intersectionality.
A2.1.5	Conduct an audit of leadership and committee membership across the additional equality grounds.
A2.2.19	Aim to reduce the gender pay gap at senior levels by increasing representation of women in senior roles through actions on recruitment and promotion.
A2.4.21	Complete and implement the Support for Pregnant Students Policy.
A1.2.3	Establish an annual President's EDI award to staff.
A2.4.20	Seek additional lactation/breastfeeding/parent rooms on campus to support mothers.
A2.3.4	Review where recruitment competitions are being advertised with a view to identifying additional portals and networks.
A2.2.9	Lobby the Promotions Review Committee to consider different academic career pathways to promotions.
A2.4.1	Monitor how the staff communication strategies of UL leaders affect the Staff Survey 2024 responses relating to trust.

Figure 6: 2025 Priority Actions for Athena Swan



Progress towards Gender Balance in Senior Academic Positions

UL continues to make progress in gender balance in senior academic positions and to address the leaky pipeline towards full professor level and in support of our strategic plan's KPI (5.2.1) to achieve 40% representation at professorial level by 2026. UL success within initiatives such as career supports in preparing for academic advancement and **SALI professorships** have helped populate the pipeline and prepare candidates for the next career step.

The 40% target will be a challenge as capacity at lower academic grades needs to be further enhanced and the career pipeline nurtured in ensure women consider applying for full professorships through personal chairs.

Note: To provide an accurate breakdown of gender representation at each academic grade, we are providing personal grade data from Dec 2019 onwards. For example, while HoDs are paid at professor (assoc prof) level, it is possible that not all HoDs are professors (assoc prof).

UL is also working to progress gender equality across other career frameworks by examining the recruitment trends across research and PMSS employees.

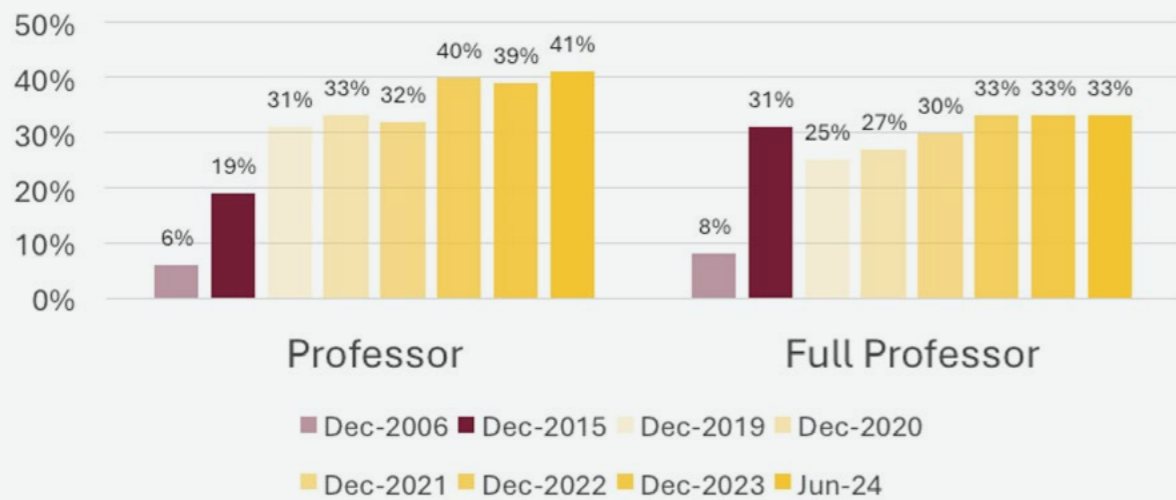


Figure 7: Percentage of Females in senior academic positions

Snapshot	%f Professor	%f Full Professors
Dec-2006	6%	8%
Dec-2015	19 %	31%
Dec-2019	31% (13n)	25% (18n)
Dec-2020	33% (20n)	27% (19n)
Dec-2021	32% (18n)	30% (22n)
Dec-2022	40% (35n)	33% (26n)
Dec-2023	39% (35n)	33% (26n)
June-2024	41% (34n)	33% (25n)

Table 3: %F Full Professors & Professors 2006-2024



Academic Career Pipelines

The following tables highlights the trend in recruitment within career framework by gender over the last 3 years and the success rate in progressing from application to shortlisting and for application to job offer. We analyse each framework by year as well as category position to identify trends that impact the career pipelines.

Academic Recruitment by Category

Staff Category	Gender	Applied	Shortlisted	Job offers	Shortlisted: applied	Job offer: shortlisted	Job offer: applied
Assistant Professor (HEA LBB)	Female	224	68	26	30%	38%	12%
	Male	457	76	18	17%	24%	4%
	PNS*	16	4	1	25%	25%	6%
	% F	32%	46%	58%			
Associate Professor B (HEA Lecturer)	Female	75	30	9	40%	30%	12%
	Male	213	41	9	19%	22%	4%
	PNS*	7	1	0	14%	0%	0%
	% F	25%	42%	50%			
Associate Professor A (HEA Snr Lecturer)	Female	4	2	0	50%	0%	0%
	Male	17	12	3	71%	25%	18%
	PNS*	1	1	0	100%	0%	0%
	% F	18%	13%	0%			
Professor (HEA Associate Professor)	Female	10	6	3	60%	50%	30%
	Male	13	8	3	62%	38%	23%
	PNS*	1	0	0	0%	-	0%
	% F	42%	43%	50%			
Full Professor (HEA Professor)	Female	2	2	1	100%	50%	50%
	Male	7	5	2	71%	40%	29%
	PNS*	8	5	3	63%	60%	38%
	% F	12%	17%	17%			

Table 4: Application trend for Academic Recruitment by Year (LBB to Prof) for recruitments that closed in 2024

Teacher Recruitment by Category

Staff Category	Gender	Applied	Shortlisted	Job offers	Shortlisted: applied	Job offer: shortlisted	Job offer: applied
TAs	Female	113	36	16	32%	44%	14%
	Male	147	31	11	21%	35%	7%
	PNS*	5	2	1	40%	50%	20%
	% F	43%	52%	57%			
Assoc Teacher	Female	90	22	6	24%	27%	7%
	Male	69	12	4	17%	33%	6%
	PNS*	3	1	0	33%	0%	0%
	% F	56%	63%	60%			
Teacher / University Teacher	Female	63	13	6	21%	46%	10%
	Male	106	15	4	14%	27%	4%
	PNS*	2	1	0	50%	0%	0%
	% F	37%	45%	60%			

Table 5: Application trend for Teacher Recruitment by Year (LBB to Prof)

Researcher Recruitment by Category

Staff Category	Gender	Applied	Shortlisted	Job offers	Shortlisted: applied	Job offer: shortlisted	Job offer: applied
Research Assistant	Female	201	57	18	28%	32%	9%
	Male	139	23	6	17%	26%	4%
	PNS*	12	2	1	17%	50%	8%
	% F	57%	70%	72%			
Post Doc Researcher	Female	276	81	33	29%	41%	12%
	Male	774	160	44	21%	28%	6%
	PNS*	7	2	0	29%	0%	0%
	% F	26%	33%	43%			
Research Fellow	Female	72	18	8	25%	44%	11%
	Male	78	23	5	29%	22%	6%
	PNS*	-	-	-	-	-	-
	% F	48%	44%	62%			
Senior Research Fellow	Female	5	2	0	40%	0%	0%
	Male	12	4	1	33%	25%	8%
	PNS*	1	1	1	100%	100%	100%
	% F	28%	29%	0%			

Table 6: Researcher Recruitment by Category

Administration Recruitment by Category

Staff Category	Gender	Applied	Shortlisted	Job offers	Shortlisted: applied	Job offer: shortlisted	Job offer: applied
Administrator	Female	96	46	16	48%	35%	17%
	Male	21	7	2	33%	29%	10%
	PNS*	1	0	0	0%	-	0%
	% F	81%	87%	89%			
Senior Administrator	Female	371	117	33	32%	28%	9%
	Male	127	26	5	20%	19%	4%
	PNS*	5	0	0	0%	-	0%
	% F	74%	82%	87%			
Executive Administrator	Female	452	136	38	30%	28%	8%
	Male	208	61	15	29%	25%	7%
	PNS*	9	2	0	22%	0%	0%
	% F	68%	68%	72%			
Senior Executive Administrator	Female	251	69	27	27%	39%	11%
	Male	189	41	10	22%	24%	5%
	PNS*	3	0	0	0%	-	0%
	% F	57%	63%	73%			
SAO 1	Female	79	28	10	35%	36%	13%
	Male	58	19	5	33%	26%	9%
	PNS*	-			-	-	-
	% F	58%	60%	67%			
SAO 2	Female	25	5	1	20%	20%	4%
	Male	37	6	2	16%	33%	5%
	PNS*	1	0	0	0%	-	0%
	% F	40%	45%	33%			
SAO 3	Female	1	1	1	100%	100%	100%
	Male	-			-	-	-
	PNS*	-			-	-	-
	% F	100%	100%	100%			

Table 7: Administration Recruitment by Category

Assoc Professor A to Professor (SL to AP)

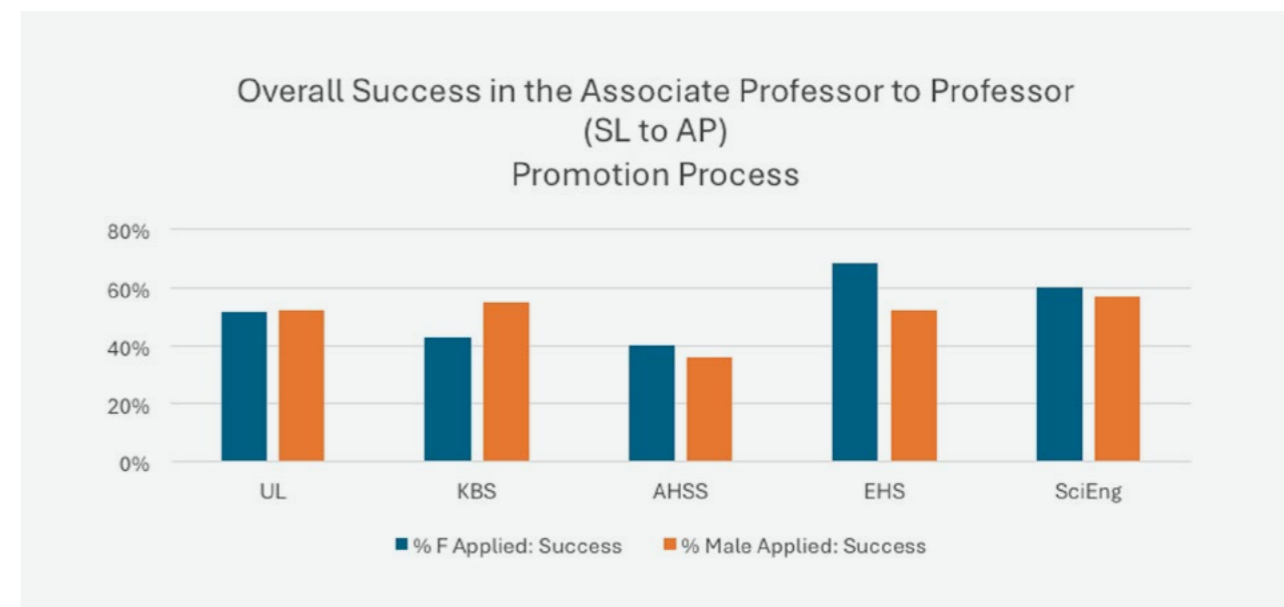


Figure 8: Associate Professor A to Professor (SL to AP)

Preparing for Academic Advancement

UL's Human Rights-EDI Office led on the sectoral 'Preparing for Academic Advancement' Gender Equality Enhancement Funded Programme in collaboration with our Project Partners. We placed a call for 'Expressions of Interest' for the fourth and final roll out of the programme in April 2024. Including this cohort, 96 women from 7 Universities at AP A (formerly SL) level, will have completed the programme.

The aim of this sectoral modular Programme is to support Senior Lecturer level (now known as Associate Professor A) academic women in preparing successful promotions applications to Professor level and in so doing support institutions in achieving the very ambitious HEA target of 40% representation of men and women at full professorial level by 2026. The programme contributes to the sectoral aims to:

- deliver a positive action intervention for academic women (HEA 1.17).
- support institutions to accelerate gender balance (HEA 1.4), by providing support to academic women to submit and successfully achieve promotion.
- provide cross institutional senior professorial mentors providing one to one advice specifically on portfolio development & strategies to successfully navigate their pathway to promotion.

A unique aspect of this programme is the provision of mentoring from senior accomplished academics who have agreed to give freely of their time to support participants over a 12-month period.

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Introduction and Executive Summary

1. The legislative requirement

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 and Regulations 2022 published on 3rd June 2022 requires organisations with over 250 employees to report on their hourly gender pay gap across a range of metrics. The Regulations set out the detail on how these calculations are made.

An 'Employee' is defined as a person who is an employee for the purposes of the Employment Equality Act 1998 and is employed by the university on the snapshot date. The Snapshot date for University of Limerick in 2024 is 30/06/2024.

2. Provision of data

The Employment Equality Act 1998 (Section 20A) Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations 2022 information for University of Limerick is as follows:

- **Mean** hourly pay of male and female employees = **12.1%**
- **Median** hourly pay of male and female employees = **8.6%**
- **Mean** hourly pay of male and female part-time employees = **18.7%**
- **Median** hourly pay of male and female part-time employees = **5.9%**
- **Mean** hourly pay of male and female employees on temporary contracts = **6.8%**
- **Median** hourly pay of male and female employees on temporary contracts = **17.7%**

The percentage of male and female employees who were paid **bonus remuneration** - Not applicable for reporting purposes.

- The percentage of male and female employees who received **benefits-in-kind** - Not applicable for reporting purposes.
- The percentages of male and female employees who fall into quartile pay bands.

2024	Female	Male
Q1 %	59%	41%
Q2 %	59%	41%
Q3 %	53%	47%
Q4 %	47%	53%

3. Our Gender Pay Gap Analysis

Based on the on-going analysis of the gender pay figures, our strict adherence to approved levels of pay for public service grades prevents the issue of pay inequality occurring.

We note the concentration of females in various administrative and support grades. While we see equal numbers in Academic grades the trend shows a reduction in female participation at the more senior academic grades, with the same issue visible across all Research grades. The effect of the concentration of genders in particular roles become compounded over time.

Covid 19 saw an increase in the number of people electing to work part-time or step out of the workforce temporarily to provide caregiving responsibilities. This impact continues to be felt and is a significant contributor to the overall figures noted.

4. Proposed Actions for University of Limerick

Actions regarding gender pay are encompassed in our Athena Swan Framework which includes the following key priorities;

- Priority 1:** To embed gender equality throughout the institution
- Priority 2:** To address the imbalance and advance the representation of women at senior academic levels in the institution
- Priority 3:** Demonstrate the impact of Athena Swan

The framework also now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly. The University of Limerick's Athena SWAN Silver award is testament to our determination to continue advancing these priorities.



Pillar 2: Inclusive Campus

Pillar 2 of the UL Strategy Plan focuses on fostering an inclusive campus that supports equity, respect, and belonging for all. This commitment reflects our dedication to creating a welcoming environment where diversity is celebrated, barriers to participation are addressed, and every individual feels empowered to succeed.

To uphold this commitment, the following actions have been adopted under this pillar:

Access and Participation

UL continues to provide a variety of access routes to higher education to traditionally underrepresented communities and to support students to thrive within UL. Under the national access plan UL has committed to supporting priority student groups who are:

- Socioeconomically disadvantaged
- Members of the Irish Traveller and Roma communities
- Students with disabilities including intellectual disabilities.

DARE	HEAR	FET/QQI	Mature Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access route to education for students from non traditional learning backgrounds including students with disabilities • 8.6% of new entrants in 2023/24 • 92.9% progression rate (2023/24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access route for students for school leavers for socio-economically disadvantaged background • 5.6 % of new entrants in 2023/24 • 92.9% progression rate (2023/24) Access University Course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry route for students from QQI level 5 or 6 courses to level 8 courses • 2.9% of new entrants in 2023/24 • 92.3% progression rate (2023/24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students older than 23 years on year of entry to undergraduate programme • 2.7% of new entrants in 2023/24 • 89.5% progression rate (2023/24)

Figure 9: Source HEA Key Facts and Figures
<https://hea.ie/statistics/data-for-download-and-visualisations/key-facts-figures/>

Dignity & Respect Policy & Procedures

In line with our commitment to promoting an inclusive campus (Pillar 2), a comprehensive Dignity & Respect Policy and procedures have been developed, which include measures against discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

The Student Dignity & Respect (D&R) Policy & Procedures had not been comprehensively reviewed since 2017. A comprehensive update was undertaken in 2023/2024. This included a review of best practice D&R policies & procedures in the Irish HEIs and the UK sector. Consultation with stakeholders (i.e., Provost Office, Office of the Advocates, UL Complaints & Discipline & Vetting Unit; the Student Affairs Division, Student Information and Support co-ordinators) was undertaken.

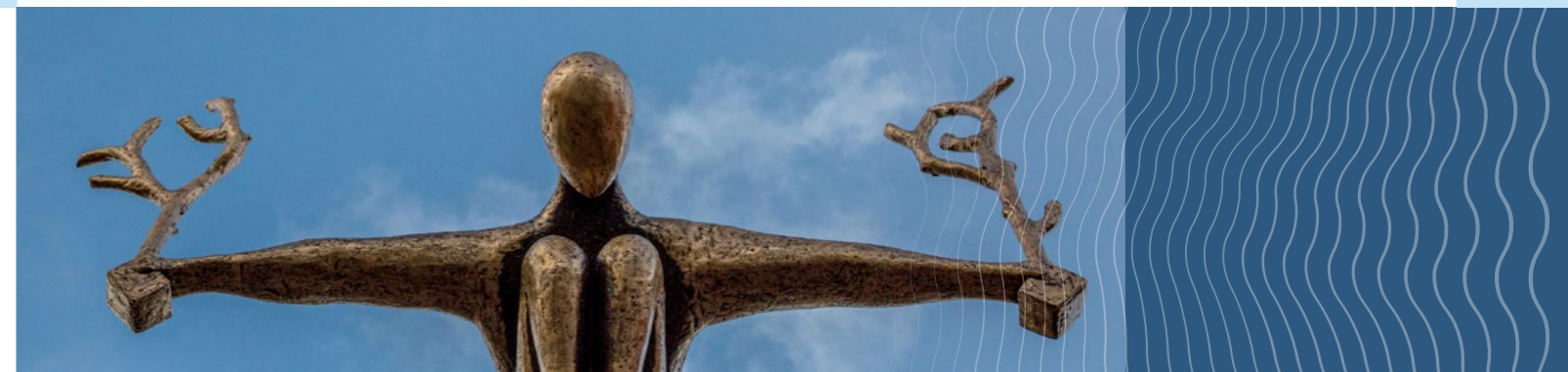
The staff D&R policy & Procedures were integrated into the Student D&R policy & Procedures, at the request of key internal stakeholders.

The Policy and Procedures, as now presented, clearly outline several key modifications to both the policy content and procedures, ensuring they are comprehensive and inclusive.

Modifications in the Dignity & Respect Policy Content

The updated policy introduces several key concepts, including:

- **Concept of Dignity and Respect:** Informed by the HR EDI Strategy 2023-2027, and scholarly materials.
- **Protected Grounds:** Recognising the foundational areas of discrimination protection.
- **Harassment and Discrimination:** Including both direct and indirect forms.
- **Victimisation:** Addressing retaliatory actions against individuals raising complaints.
- **Bystander Engagement:** Introducing roles such as Bystander, Active Bystander, and Upstander.
- **Intersectionality:** Highlighting the interplay of various discrimination grounds.
- **Institutional Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying:** With a focus on UL's Vicarious Liability framework.



Modifications in the Dignity & Respect Procedures

Changes to procedures aim to enhance transparency, accessibility, and accountability. These include:

- **Transparent Reporting Procedure:** Making the process clear for all stakeholders.
- **Shared Burden of Proof:** Ensuring both the complainant and respondent share responsibilities.
- **Extended Timeline:** Allowing reports up to six months after graduation.
- **Online Accessibility:** Including an online form and submission link for complaints and appeals.
- **Visual Guides:** Providing accessible flowcharts for complaints, investigations, and appeal mechanisms, designed to accommodate screen readers and individuals with neurodivergencies.
- **Policy Integration:** Establishing clear links to other related policies for coherence.
- **Digital Submission:** Replacing conventional methods with online complaint and appeal forms.



Promoting Dignity & Respect on Campus

Training for Dignity & Respect Ambassadors

On October 14, in-person training on the Student Dignity & Respect Policy and procedures was delivered to potential Dignity & Respect Ambassadors. Following the training, ambassadors were recruited to promote Dignity & Respect on campus. This session was led by Dr Niloufar Omid, the EDI Policy and Project Development Officer, who will continue to support the active Student Dignity & Respect Ambassadors throughout their volunteering.

In this session, students learned about:

- Definitions of respect, dignity, discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimisation on campus.
- How to recognise these issues (case study).
- Ways to support victims and be an active bystander.
- Available campus support services.



Above (l-r): Student Dignity & Respect Ambassadors: Thi Cat Tien Ho, Aoife Lawlor, Gayathri Sunilkumar, Roisin Jones, Aleena Agnes Philip, Riyaa Paruthi, Aditi Agarwal with Dr Niloufar Omid (EDI Policy Officer)

Raising Awareness on Bullying and Harassment

In collaboration with the Student Engagement and Support Officer, Philip Desmond, and as part of the Be Mindful programme, in-person training on Dignity and Respect policy and procedures was designed and delivered to students by Dr Niloufar Omid on October 15, 2024. Based on student feedback, the session received a rating of 9.21 out of 10 for both the training and the trainer.



Training on the Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures for students and a group of staff serving as support providers under this policy



Philip Desmond, the Student Engagement and Support Officer and organiser of the Be Mindful programme, alongside participants in the training, shows Racism the Red Card

Conferences and Events

International Women's Day Conference

On Friday, 8 March 2024, in celebration of International Women's Day (IWD), the University of Limerick (UL) proudly hosted a symposium titled **'Women and Leadership for Peace and Sustainability.'** In this event, five esteemed female university presidents gathered, highlighting the significant role of women in leadership for peace and sustainability.

Throughout the conference, presentations from the university presidents underscored:

- The pivotal role of women in leadership for peace and sustainability.
- The importance of shaping an equitable society.
- The imperative understanding of leadership in fostering diversity of thought.
- The generosity required to bring everyone together in pursuit of common goals.
- The importance of incorporating women's perspectives and lived experiences into leadership.
- The necessity of respecting female leaders and their contributions.
- The urgency for anti-racist, feminist leadership to address climate challenges effectively.

The symposium was chaired by Liz O'Donnell, Chairperson of the Road Safety Authority & Former TD and Government Minister, who brought her extensive experience in policy-making in Irish political history to enrich the discussions. Additionally, Nora Clinton delivered an impactful keynote, drawing from her role as the Head of the Mission-oriented Innovation Network at UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, emphasising a bottom-up approach to innovation.

In the concluding remarks, Dr Marie Connolly, the Director of UL Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, summarised the symposium's success. She emphasised the pivotal role of women as powerful agents of change and called for continued support for women's empowerment. The symposium served as a significant platform to recognise and amplify the voices of women in leadership as role models, reaffirming the commitment to peace, sustainability, and gender equality.



#IWD2024UL
 #WomenLeadership
 #InspireInclusion
 #Peace
 #Sustainability



APEX Event

Dr Katriona O’Sullivan joined us on Wednesday, 27 March, in UL for a fascinating talk about her inspiring journey from poverty, teenage pregnancy and homelessness to becoming an award winning lecturer whose work challenges the barriers to education.



Dr Katriona O’Sullivan

Dr Katriona O’Sullivan is an associate professor in the faculty of Science in Maynooth University, a psychologist and memoirist. Her first book, Poor, debuted at #1 on the Irish Non-Fiction bestseller list. As one of 5 children in a home shaped by her parent’s heroin addiction, Katriona’s story chronicles her journey from poverty, teenage pregnancy, homelessness to graduating with a PhD from Trinity College Dublin and becoming an award winning lecture whose work challenges barriers to education.

Staff DisAbility Network

The Staff Disability Network was set up in 2022 and has 17 members. The Network is open to any member of staff who identifies themselves as having a disability, those who have association with someone with a disability and, also to those who wish to act as allies and provide support to individuals with disabilities. The network includes representatives from Health & Safety, Buildings & Estates, HR, Disability Support Service, Universal Design team members. The chair of this Network is Rob Hickey and the co-chair is Caoilinn Kennedy.

Staff Disability Members	Role
Andrew Rock	Senior Employee Relations Specialist
Beth Jennings	Employability Officer
Caitlin Neachtain	University Teacher in Technical Communication and Instructional Design
Caleb Derven	Head, Digital Scholarship & Systems
Caoilinn Kennedy	Disability Support Officer
Caroline Lane	Disability Support Services Manager
Cliona Donnellan	Administration and Insurance Manager
Lucy Ann Buckley	Professor School of Law
Maria Rieder	Assistant Dean, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (AHSS)
Marie Connolly	Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Martin Richardson	Health and Safety Technical Officer
Michael O’Brien	EDI Athena SWAN Data Analyst / Projects Officer
Rob Hickey	Safety Officer
Rosie Gowran	Associated Professor Occupational Therapy
Thomas O’Shaughnessy	Assistive Technology Officer
Sadhbh O’Dwyer	Researcher
Maureen Keogh	Senior Human Right EDI Administrator

Figure 10: Staff Disability Network Members

The purpose of this Staff DisAbility Network is to support staff who have a disability, have a long-term health condition or neurodivergence and to support those working with or who are interested in inclusive practices. The network is an integral part of the structure of the HR-EDI Steering Committee contributing to the HR-EDI Strategy.

Staff Disability Policy

The network has provided feedback on the Staff Disability Policy. An easy-to-use form has also been published intended for staff members at the University of Limerick who wish to request an assessment for reasonable accommodation due to a disability, learning difficulty, or significant ongoing health condition. The assessment will help determine the most effective accommodation.

Campus Route Accessibility Audit Update

Buildings & Estates are engaged with a consultant to carry out a campus route accessibility audit.

Staff Census Survey

Earlier this year the Staff Disability census went through a thorough review by the network, HR, EDI and Unite. The Staff Disability census was sent out to all staff on October 9th. The information gathered from this census will assist the university in completing the counting of employees with disabilities for the annual return to the National Disability Authority under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005.



Universal Design and Inclusive Practice @ UL (UDIPUL)

Committee for Universal Design and Inclusive Practice @ UL (UDIPUL)

The Committee for Universal Design and Inclusive Practice @UL was approved by Executive Committee in July 2024.

The purpose of this committee is to guide a whole-of-institution approach to universal design and inclusive practice and to assist UL in achieving its strategic objectives around inclusive practice, accessibility, and universal design.

This committee is a Sub-committee of HREDI under Pillar 2: Inclusive Campus. It ensures that institutional structures, policies and practices are in place to support embedding of UD and IP across the four pillars of:



Figure 11: The 4 Pillars of the ALTITUDE Charter

This committee aims to ensure UL has an overarching understanding and oversight of its obligations around inclusion and access, spanning our strategic aims and objectives set out within e.g. UL Human Rights EDI Strategy, UL Strategic Plan, UL Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and the UL-HEA Performance Agreement.



Autism in UL Special Interest Group (SIG)

The Autism@UL SIG comprises individuals and organisations from UL and the broader community who are passionate about autism, neurodiversity and fostering inclusive environments. The Autism@UL SIG is led by the group's co-founders, Dr Michelle O'Donoghue (Health Research Institute, School of Allied Health) and Dr Cristiano Storni (Interaction Design Centre, Computer Science and Information System department).

Membership includes UL staff and students, representatives from local organisations, and members of the local community. This group is also comprised of autistic people, family members, friends, advocates, allies and researchers, with many members wearing several 'hats.'

The goals of this committee are as follows:

- Develop a collaborative multidisciplinary network of research active academics focused on advancing the vision of Autism@UL SIG.
- Foster the development of an inclusive campus and work environment in UL.
- Organise and campaign for autism-related events and initiatives.
- Attract national and international funds as well as activate international collaborations to engage in autism research.
- Foster highly trained PhD graduates.

Pillar 3: Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity & Inclusion underscores our commitment to creating an equitable, inclusive, and respectful environment for all. This pillar focuses on celebrating diversity, removing barriers to participation, and ensuring that every member of our community feels valued and empowered. By integrating these principles into all areas of university life, we aim to foster a culture where individuals can thrive, contribute meaningfully, and reach their full potential. To achieve the aspirations outlined in this pillar, the following foundations were established, and subsequent actions were taken under these foundations.

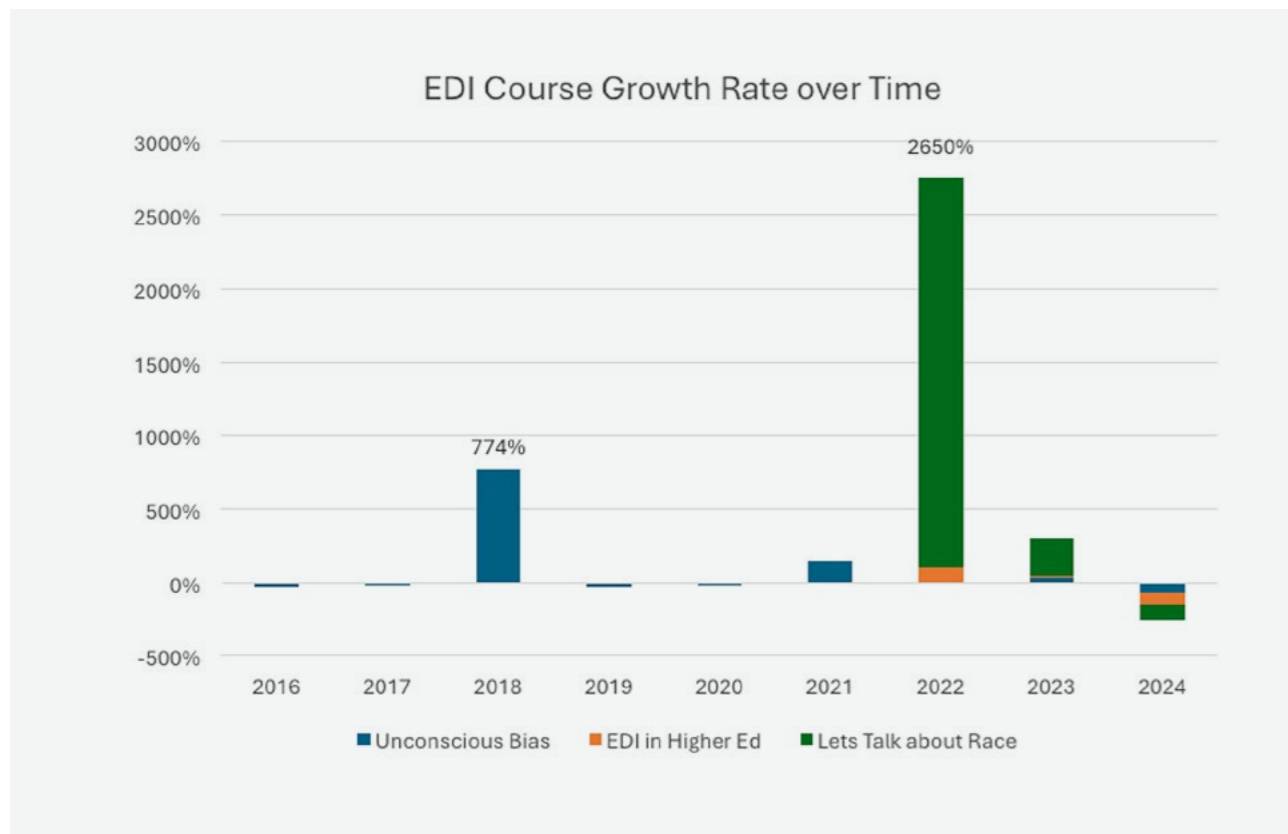


Figure 12: EDI programmes growth in take up over time

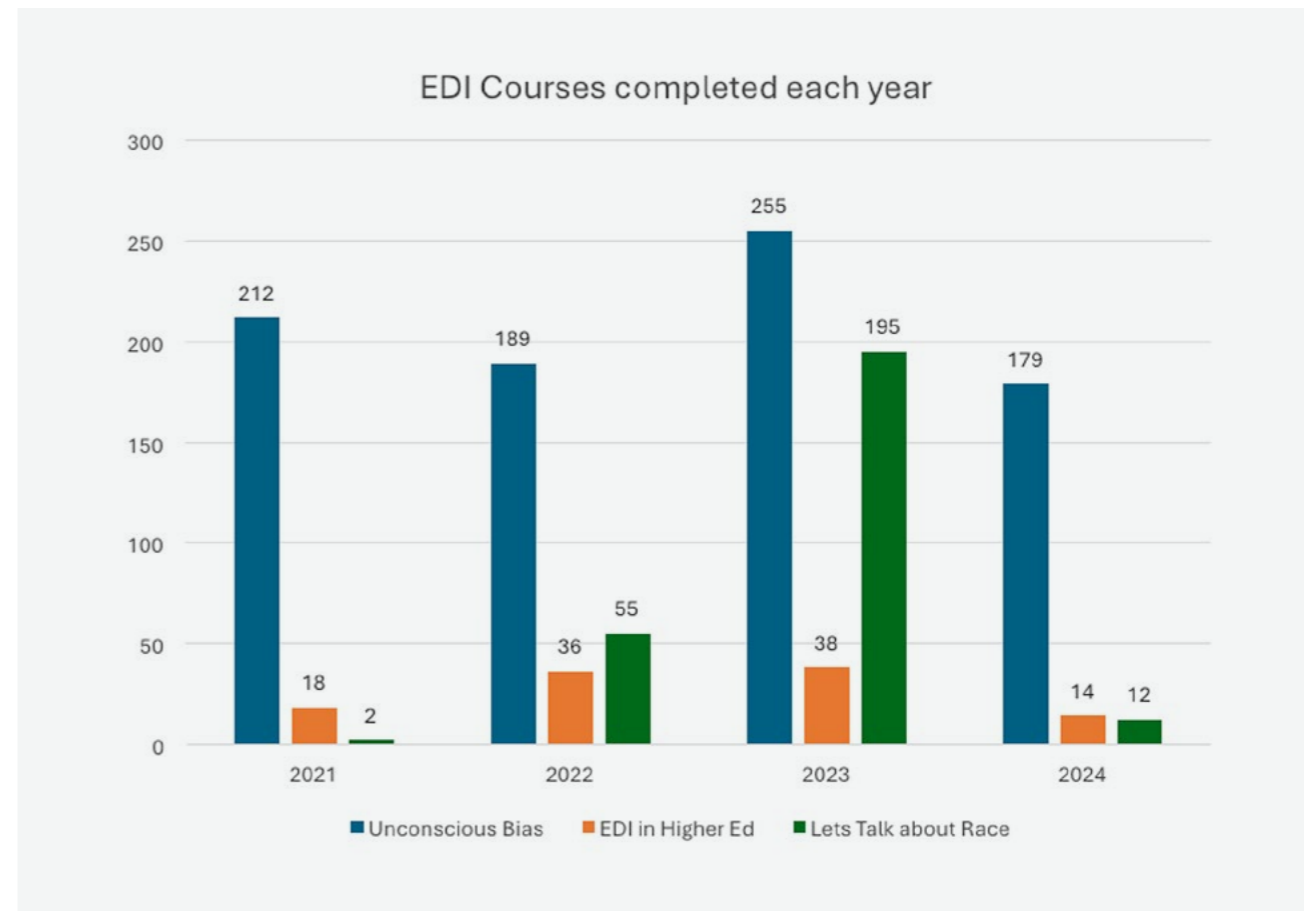


Figure 13: EDI courses completed each year

Ethnic Diversity Forum (EDF)

The Ethnic Diversity Forum (EDF), a sub-committee of the UL Human Rights-EDI Steering Committee, was established in 2021 to provide guidance on policies and action plans prior to their approval by the UL Human Rights-EDI Steering Committee, which itself is a sub-committee of the UL Executive Committee.

The mission of the EDF is to promote race equality on campus and to develop policies that foster inclusion, respect, safety, and fairness within the UL community.

In 2024, the EDF Steering Committee convened four quarterly meetings in January, May, September, and December. The following key actions were undertaken during the year:

1. The Steering Committee Composition

In January 2024, Dr Niloufar Omid succeeded Yoga Nathan, the inaugural Chairperson, as the new Chairperson of the Ethnic Diversity Forum (EDF) Steering Committee. Additionally, in September 2024, the Steering Committee welcomed two new members: Dr Yonit Kosovske and Aysha Liyana KC. Currently, the composition of the Ethnic Diversity Forum (EDF) Steering Committee is as follows:

Steering Committee members

- Dr Marie Connolly
- Dr Yoga Nathan
- Dr Niloufar Omid
- Dr Andrew Shorten
- Dr George Barreto
- Dr James Carr
- Dr Mariano Paz
- Professor Helen Phelan
- Professor Hussain Mahdi
- Dr Maria Rieder
- Dr Yonit Kosovske
- Aysha Liyana KC
- Dr Anca Minescu
- Lucy Edith Kiiza (Postgraduate Student Union President)
- Ronan Cahill (Student Life President)

Furthermore, a new membership form was introduced in January 2024 to attract more members, replacing the previous recruitment method. This initiative successfully engaged around 80 new members throughout the year.

2. Development of the Race Equality Framework and Action Plan (Jan 2024-Sept 2024)

The EDF has played a key role in the development process of the Race Equality Framework and Action Plan, contributing valuable insights and expertise to ensure its alignment with UL's commitment to diversity and inclusion. In January 2024, the revised draft was shared with the EDF Steering Committee for further feedback and was subsequently finalised by the Human Rights-EDI Office in March. Between May and September 2024, the Action Plan successfully passed through all approval processes, including:

- Human Rights-EDI Committee
- Executive Committee
- Governing Authority (GA) Student Experience, Access, and Equality Committee
- People & Culture Governing Authority (GA) Subcommittee
- Governing Authority (GA)

In October 2024, the Action Plan was officially launched by the Acting President.

3. Launch of the UL Anti-Racism Campaign

On 21 March 2024, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the EDF launched the UL Anti-Racism Campaign with a panel discussion titled "Victims of Racism." The panel featured speakers from academia, An Garda Síochána, and civil society organisations, including DORAS.

The event coincided with Wear Red Day, a powerful symbol of solidarity against racism.



Above (l-r): Dr James Carr (Associate Professor in Sociology, UL), Donnah S. Vuma (Doras), Dr Marie Connolly (Director of HR-EDI Office, UL), Dr Niloufar Omid (EDI Policy Officer, UL), Sgt. Rosaleen O'Connor (An Garda Síochána), and Roger Dsilva (Postgraduate Student Union President)



Plassey House was illuminated in red to show Racism the Red card for one week starting March 21

4. Enhancing EDF Engagement and Resources

EDF Diversity Calendar 2024

The EDF webpage was updated with new resources. The EDF Diversity Calendar 2024 was created, serving as both an intercultural and interfaith calendar and a platform to highlight the HR-EDI strategy 2023–2027.

Training & Awareness Raising

Race Equality Training for An Garda Síochána and UL Staff

Following the success of the "Show a Red Card to Racism" event held on campus in March, which involved An Garda Síochána, a pilot Anti-Racism Training programme was arranged with Dr James Carr and the SALAAM Anti-Muslim Project team. The training, scheduled for June 10th, targeted a select group of UL staff and An Garda Síochána. This initiative aligned with the HEA Race Equality Principles and Implementation Plan, aiming to have a positive impact on the broader community. The training received highly positive feedback from participants.



Race Equality Training for a select group of staff & An Garda Síochána

Training for Athena Swan Race and Ethnicity Working Group Members Across Irish HEIs: How to Develop Race Equality Action Plans at Irish HEIs

On Thursday, 28 March, Dr Niloufar Omidī delivered a workshop for the Athena SWAN Race and Ethnicity Working Group in conjunction with Owen Ward, Program Manager for Race Equality at the University of Galway. The workshop aimed to elaborate on preliminary steps in developing race equality action plans at Irish HEIs. The Athena SWAN Race and Ethnicity Working Group comprises EDI Office representatives from Irish HEIs across Ireland.

Intersectional Equality Workshop for UL Staff

In response to requests from colleagues and to enhance transparency of our policies within the UL community, the Human Rights-EDI Office, with support from UL Global, hosted a workshop on Intersectional Equality for Staff on 9 December. 40 staff members from various departments and sectors attended the training.

The workshop covered the following key topics:

- Conceptual and Legal Framework of Intersectional Equality
- Impact of Intersectional Discrimination
- Intersectional Battle Fatigue and Minority Stress
- Using Intersectionality as a Lens (Case Study - Group Activities)
- Practical Strategies to Address Inequalities

The workshop, delivered by Dr Niloufar Omidī, was well-received, with active participation from staff in diverse roles across the university.



UL staff from diverse roles across the university engaging in group discussions and activities, analysing cases of intersectional discrimination

5. Festivals & Events

Celebrating Diversity and Africa Days

On 22 May 2024, the Human Rights-EDI Office and UL Global organised an event in the Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO) Studio to celebrate both Cultural Diversity Day and Africa Day.

The event featured Sharon Murphy, a renowned Black-Irish musician and singer, who performed original songs addressing anti-racism and her personal experiences in Ireland. Michelle Ivy Alwedo, a UL Master's student and poet, also shared an original poem during the event. Open to the public, the event reflected UL's commitment to influencing society beyond the campus.



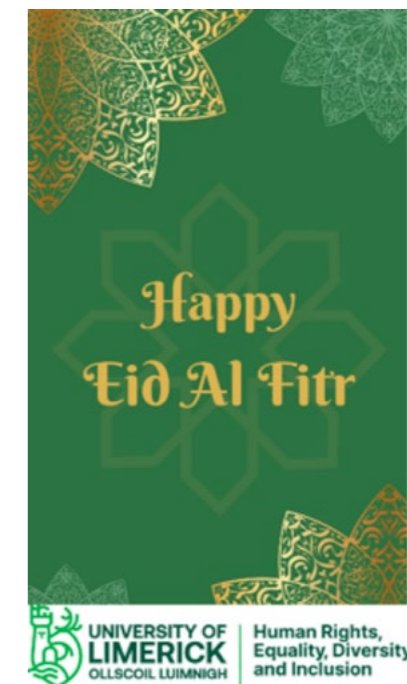
Above: Sharon Murphy, Black-Irish Singer/Songwriter



Above (l-r): Dr Marie Connolly (Human Rights-EDI Office Director, UL), Sharon Murphy (Musician and Song Writer), Dr Niloufar Omidī (EDI Policy Officer, UL), Michelle Ivy Alwedo (MA Student in Creative Writing, UL)

Eid Al-Fitr

In April 2024, the Human Rights-EDI Office supported the Eid Al-Fitr festival, which was organised by the Postgraduate Students' Union and UL Global.



Jewish Festival, October 10-12, 2024

The Jewish Festival was successfully celebrated on campus from October 10-12. Yom Kippur services were held at UL on Friday, October 11, and Saturday, October 12, 2024. Students and staff from the Jewish community came together to observe and celebrate this important festival on the UL campus.



This event was supported by the Human Rights-EDI Office, the Ethnic Diversity Forum (EDF), and coordinated by Dr Yonit Kosovske, a member of the EDF Steering Committee.

Race Equality Action Plan Launch Event

On 23 October 2024, the University of Limerick achieved a significant milestone by launching the Race Equality Action Plan. UL is now the second university in Ireland to officially adopt such a plan. We are proud that this action plan reflects the voices of our staff and students from racialised groups, embedding the principle of race equality at the heart of every action we take and every decision we make at UL.

The launch event was strongly supported by UL Acting President, Professor Shane Kilcommins, and featured a powerful keynote speech by prominent scholar, Professor Kalwant Bhopal, from the University of Birmingham.



Above (l-r): Dr Marie Connolly, Professor Kalwant Bhopal, Professor Shane Kilcommins, Dr Niloufar Omid

This action plan is the result of hard work led initially by Dr George Bareto chair of the EDF Action Planning Working Group supported through meticulous research by the Human Rights-EDI Office and the EDF Steering Committee since 2021, in line with the HEA's Anti-Racism Principles, as well as Irish and EU Equality Law. We recognise that this marks the beginning of a new journey to implement this vital plan, and we appreciate the support of the entire UL community in making it a reality.



Back row (l-r): EDF Steering Committee; Dr Yoga Nathan, Dr Mariano Paz, Dr Marie Connolly, Dr George Bareto, Dr Niloufar Omid, Dr James Carr, Aysha L. K. Chaladayil

Front row (l-r): Student Dignity & Respect Ambassadors; Thi Cat Tien Ho, Aoife Lawlor, Riyaa Paruthi, Aditi Agarwal, Aleena Agnes Philip, Gayathri Sunilkumar, Chloe Nagel, Roisin Jones



Back row (l-r): Superintendent Andrew Lacey, Dr Niloufar Omid, Professor Nigel Healy, Sergeant Aoife Bannon, Garda Eoin O'Neill (Community Policing representative)

Front row (l-r): Sergeant Natasha Walsh, David Joyce (Irish Congress of Trade Unions), Professor Shane Kilcommins, Dr Marie Conolly

We were also joined by key external stakeholders, including An Garda Síochána, the civil society organisation Doras, members of the Advisory Committee monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR), and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The presence of representatives from our higher education partners—University of Galway, Trinity College Dublin, and Mary Immaculate College—was also highly impactful.

Please find the action plan here: www.ul.ie/equality-diversity-inclusion/diversity-and-inclusion/ethnic-diversity-forum

6. HEA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Enhancement Fund 2024

The University of Limerick successfully secured HEA funding for the proposed Embedding Race Equality Training in Higher Education (EMBRACED) project. This initiative aims to develop robust, evidence-based race equality training modules tailored specifically to the Irish Higher Education Institution (HEI) context. The funding application was a collaborative effort by the Human Rights-EDI Office, designed and completed in collaboration with Dr James Carr. This project will be rolled out in partnership with three HEI partners: University of Galway, Mary Immaculate College, and Trinity College Dublin.

Age Friendly University Committee

The Age Friendly University Committee was formed in 2022 and agreed its Terms of Reference for the first two years in 2023. It is operating under the auspices of the Director of UL Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and is co-chaired by Professor Rose Galvin and Professor Emeritus Joachim Fischer.

The committee members are as follows:

Name	Role
Dr Marie Connolly	Director Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Andrea La Touche	Student Community Engagement Liaison Officer
Ann Marie Kennedy	Accreditation, Quality and Compliance Officer
Donal O’Leary	Access Campus Manager
Hilary Curley	Research Assistant in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Joachim Fischer	Professor Emeritus of European Cultural Studies Co-Chair, Age Friendly University Committee, UL
Maria Rieder	Assistant Dean, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (AHSS)
Michaela Schrage-Frueh	Associate Professor in German Studies; Director of the Centre for European Studies
Pattie Punch	AHSS Research Librarian
Rose Galvin	Professor in Physiotherapy
Shirley Ryan	Mature Student Officer
Maureen Keogh	Human Rights EDI Senior Administrator
David Conway	UL Restart
David Mahedy	UL Restart
Madge O’Callaghan	PHD Student

Figure 14: Age Friendly University Committee Members

Age Friendly University (AFU) Global Network

The University of Limerick has been accepted as a member of the Age Friendly Global Network. The Age Friendly Global Network serves as a collective platform for institutes of higher education committed to creating inclusive and supportive environments across the lifespan. By joining the Global Network, UL has demonstrated our dedication to fostering lifelong learning opportunities and promoting active participation among older adults. This moment marks a significant step forward in our collective commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for individuals of all ages within our academic community. Great credit due to Professor Rose Galvin and Professor Emeritus Joachim Fischer, Chair/Co-Chair of the Age Friendly University Committee, UL on leading the application process, and to everyone on Age Friendly University Committee for their input.

Some Activities that took place in 2023/24:

- A web page has been created on the HREDI website.
- In June 2024 the President’s Office, UL submitted our application to join the Age Friendly Universities Global Network. This includes our plans for coming years.
- A provisional list has been compiled by the ADs EDI in all four Faculties of modules suitable for older people and where their participation would be welcome. Administrative procedures of how to facilitate the participation of older students (65+) and the fees requested are being worked on.
- Committee members met with UL Management and subsequently with HR officers to see how the procedures of retaining the UL email addresses for retired members of staff can be made easier. These discussions are ongoing.
- Established contact with local organisations such Probus and the Limerick chapter of the University of the Third Age and are actively exploring synergies and possibilities of cooperation.
- In contact with the only ERASMUS+ network focussing on older people ERASMUS +60 (<https://www.erasmusplus60.uvsq.fr/>) coordinated by the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines in France, of 7 universities and the EUF from 8 different European countries.
- The Committee has been in touch with the offices of the Minister of State for Older People, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Irish Universities Association in connection with the definition of Lifelong Learning as Learning up to age 65. The definition closes funding opportunities. The situation has been confirmed.
- PhD student formally registered in UL dedicated to advancing the evidence base in relation to barriers and levers to UL advancing its ambition to being an Age Friendly University.

UL Age Friendly University Launch

On Friday, 8th December, the University of Limerick (UL) celebrated the launch of its Age Friendly University initiative. Dr Marie Connolly, Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (HREDI), opened the event and welcomed Acting President Professor Shane Kilcommins, who officially announced UL's membership to the Age Friendly University Global Network (AFU). The AFU movement seeks to reshape how we live and work by expanding educational opportunities across the lifespan.

The event attracted a diverse audience, including UL staff, members of UL Restart, older adults from the Mid-West Region, and representatives from local Age Friendly Alliances.

Established in 2022 by the HREDI Department under its Diversity & Inclusion Pillar, the UL Age Friendly University Committee aims to promote age inclusivity and lifelong learning while fostering community engagement among older adults. The committee brings together dedicated staff committed to making UL a more age-friendly environment. It is co-chaired by Professor Rose Galvin, Professor in Physiotherapy at UL and a member of the Ageing Research Centre and the Health Research Board, and Professor Joachim Fischer, Emeritus Jean Monnet Chair in European Cultural Studies.

The Keynote speaker at the launch, which was held in the School of Medicine was the very imminent Regius Professor Rose Anne Kenny – Regius Professor of Physics TCD and founding Principal Investigator of The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing (TILDA). Presentations were also provided by Alix McDonald Head of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Strathclyde and chair of the AFU Global Network and Dr Christine O'Kelly – Age friendly University Co-ordinator in DCU.



Left (l-r): Professor Joachim Fischer, Professor Rose Galvin (Co-Chairs of the Age Friendly University Committee), Keynote speaker Regius Professor Rose Anne Kenny – Regius Professor of Physics TCD and founding Principal Investigator of The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing (TILDA), Acting President Professor Shane Kilcommins and Dr Marie Connolly, Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (HREDI)

Activities planned for 2024/25 include:

- Event marking UL membership of Age Friendly Universities Global network, later in 2024
- Continue our efforts on the email retention issue
- Participation in Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2025
- Finalising the list of suitable modules and launch of the programme
- Planning for a national conference on Age Friendly Universities in 2026.

EqUL Staff LGBTQIA Network

EqUL is UL's staff network LGBTQIA+ which aims to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Pride Month in July is a vibrant and inclusive celebration that honors the LGBTQ+ community, their history, achievements, and ongoing struggle for equality. This annual event serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of acceptance, diversity, and love. UL highlighted its commitment by ensuring the pride flag was raised outside Plassey House in July.



UL Student Life, Postgraduate Student Union, OutInUL, EqUL the LGBTQIA+ staff network and supported by the Human Rights-EDI Office organised a UL pride parade. Staff & students gathered beside Brown Thomas at 1pm on Tuesday June 4th as the rain lifted.

The parade made its way through the campus and across the living bridge before culminating with some refreshments in the Pavilion.

UL staff and students also participated in the Limerick City pride parade which took place on 13th July 2024

Pronouns training: In addition to pride month EqUL organised training on the use of pronouns for staff and students to promote inclusion and support gender expression.

All Ireland LGBTQ+ Network meeting

An initiative organised by Trinity's LGBTQ+ staff network to have an all Ireland higher education network of LGBTQ+ representatives in order to share knowledge and experiences and lobby for change in the higher education sector. EqUL now represents the University of Limerick in this network.

Pillar 4: Sexual Health & Wellbeing

Sexual Health and Wellbeing is a key pillar of the HR-EDI Strategy, emphasising the importance of creating a campus environment that supports informed, inclusive, and equitable approaches to sexual health. This pillar focuses on promoting education, awareness, and access to resources related to sexual health, consent, and healthy relationships while addressing issues such as sexual violence and harassment.

By embedding these priorities into institutional practices, we aim to empower students and staff, foster a culture of respect and consent, and ensure the holistic wellbeing of the campus community.

Name	Role
Dr Marie Connolly	Director of HR-EDI (Sub-Group Lead)
Dr Sarah Kennedy	Healthy UL Manager
Maria Healy	Sexual Violence & Harassment Prevention and Response Manager
Claire Kearns	Practice Nurse Manager
Ellen Fitzmaurice	Student Support & Development Manager
Karen Fanneran	Employee Relations Manager
Shane Laffan	Advice & Advocacy (Student Life)
Síofra Foley	Student Welfare Officer (Student Life)
Lucy Edith Kiiza	Postgrad President (PSU)
Cynthia Adubango	Student Engagement & Support Officer (AHSS)
Andrea Crockett	Student Engagement & Support Officer (EHS)

Figure 15: Sexual Health and Wellbeing Committee Members



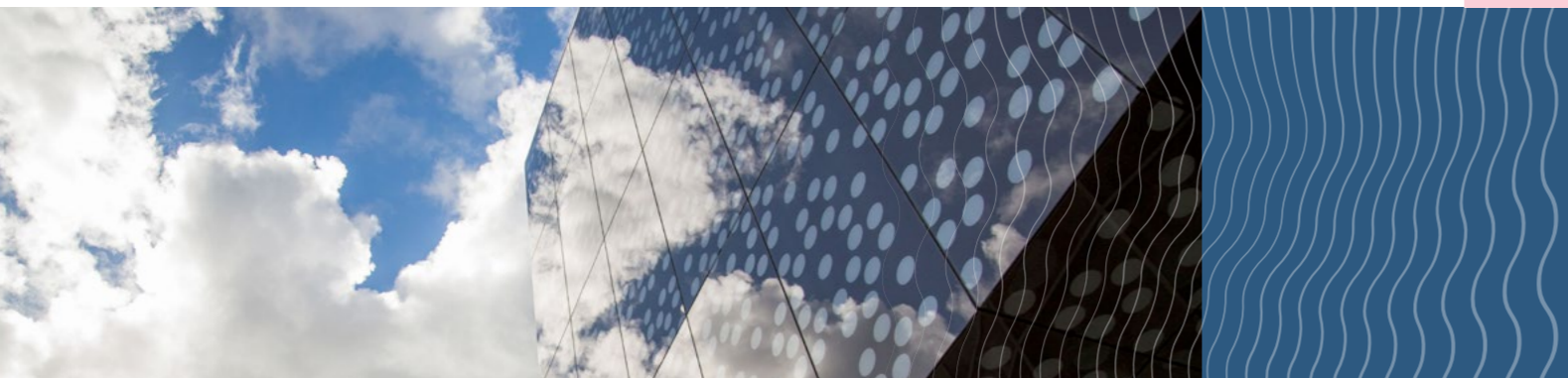
Sexual Violence Harassment (SVH) Policy for Staff and Students

We have developed a Sexual Violence and Harassment (SVH) Policy & Procedure and a Sexual Health & Wellbeing Policy to establish a robust framework for preventing, addressing, and responding to incidents of sexual violence and harassment, and promote health relationships, within the university community. The SVH Policy is aligned with national standards and reflects best practices ensuring that it is both comprehensive and for purpose.

These policies aim to address SVH comprehensively while promoting healthy relationships and over all wellbeing withing the university community.

The SVH policy includes the following key components:

- **Prevention and Education:** Proactive measures to educate the university about sexual violence and harassment, fostering a culture of respect and safety.
- **Clear Reporting Mechanism:** A transparent and accessible reporting process for students and staff.
- **Support Services:** Commitment to providing confidential trauma informed support, resources and guidance for those affected.
- **Investigation and Resolution:** A fair and timely investigation process, with appropriate measures to ensure accountability and protection for all parties involved.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Mechanisms to regularly review and update the policy to address emerging needs and feedback.



The policy was developed through extensive consultation with both internal and external stakeholders, ensuring a collaborative and inclusive process:

- **Internal Stakeholders:** Input was sought from students, faculty, and key university staff ensuring diverse perspectives were considered.
- **External Stakeholders:** Experts from organisations specialising in sexual violence prevention and response, as well as legal advisors, contributed to ensuring alignment with best practices and legislative requirements.

This collaborative approach ensures that the policy reflects the needs of the university community while maintaining compliance.

The development of this policy fulfils several critical actions outlined in the university's broader action plan on tackling sexual violence and harassment including:

- Establishing a comprehensive reporting structure.
- Enhancing awareness and education across the university community.
- Developing clear procedures for addressing and responding to incidents.
- Creating a supportive environment where individuals feel safe to report.

Recognising the importance of healthy relationships we have also developed a Sexual Health and Wellbeing Policy.



Purpose and Goals:

- Promote awareness of healthy relationships, mutual respect and consent.
- Provide access to sexual health resources.
- Normalise the conversations around sexual health to reduce stigma and encourage responsible behaviours.
- Empower students to make informed decisions about their sexual health and relationships.

This policy compliments the SVH Policy by addressing the broader context of sexual health and encouraging positive behaviours that contribute to personal and community wellbeing.

Key next steps include:

Launch of the Policies: publicising and operationalising the policy and procedure with an underpinning campus campaign.

Training and Awareness: Rolling out training for all university members to familiarise them with the policy and reporting procedures.

Ongoing Review: Establishing a feedback mechanism to continuously improve the policy based on stakeholder input and implementation outcomes.

The development of the **SVH Policy** and the **SHW Policy** marks a significant milestone in the university's commitment to fostering a culture of safety, respect, and empowerment. By addressing both prevention of SVH, and promotion of health relationships these policies work in tandem to support the holistic wellbeing of the university community.

Training

Consent

• Participation Metrics and Growth

In 2024, 2883 students attended consent education compared to 2515 in 2023. This represents a 14.6% increase in student participation. A total of 14 workshops were carried out during the year, bringing the total number of students who have attended consent workshops since 2020 to 9,973.

• Embedding Consent Workshops in Orientation

The consent workshops are now a core component of orientation for all 1st year undergraduate students. This ensures that every new student receives foundational education on consent as part of their introduction to university life.

Additionally, these workshops have been incorporated into the orientation programmes for UL Global and the School of Medicine, effectively extending the programme's impact across diverse student cohorts.



Active*Consent workshops being delivered during First Year Undergrad Orientation in UCH by Maria Healy, Sexual Violence & Harassment Prevention and Response Manager and Chloe Nagle, HREDI Office



Active Champions training day with student ambassadors from University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College, with members of the Active*Consent Team



• Innovative Engagement

The university hosted the Active*Consent Play “How I Learned About Consent”, on campus, using drama as a medium to deliver impactful and relatable messages around consent. This innovative approach fostered deeper engagement, capturing student’s attention and encouraging meaningful conversations about consent.

• Establishment of Peer Education through Consent Student Ambassadors

A cohort of 12 students was recruited as Consent Ambassadors to serve as peer educators under the President’s Volunteer Award. On the 25th of September ambassadors received a full-day training from Amy Staudt, Liam McBrearty and Clarissa Di Santis, Active*Consent, focusing on:

- Understanding consent and their role as peer educators.
- Strategies for promoting consent culture.
- Techniques for navigating challenging or sensitive situations related to consent.
- Bystander Intervention.
- How to handle disclosures of a sexual nature and effectively signpost to relevant support services.

Members of the Active*Consent team were back on campus again on the 8th of November delivering training to our student ambassadors, and colleagues from Mary Immaculate College, on their workshop facilitation skills. Clarissa Di Santis, Education and Training Lead, and Catherine Corbett, Research Assistant, facilitated the session where participants:

- learned key facilitation techniques to help them effectively and safely lead discussions about consent.
- learned how to manage potentially difficult participants to keep workshops safe and inclusive for all attendees.
- gave the opportunity to practice facilitating, so that you they could receive feedback and provide feedback to others to gain confidence in their own facilitation style.

This initiative highlights a shared commitment to empowering students as leaders and advocates for a culture of respect and understanding across campuses.

This group of enthusiastic and motivated has students brought fresh ideas and energy to the initiative, further enhancing peer-led education on consent.



Back row (l-r): Clarissa Di Santis, Charlotte Balfe, Jayde Ryan, Niamh Meaney Kathleen Maher, Dede Hearity. Front row: Jennifer Ajith, Maria Healy, Alex Carroll Tully, Catherine Corbett, Munirah Yaqoub Okponobi

The implementation of Action 11 from the Consent Framework Action Plan has achieved measurable progress. Significant increases in participation, strategic integration of consent education into orientation programmes, and the establishment of peer-led initiatives demonstrate the university's commitment to fostering a culture of consent. Future focus will include maintaining momentum, monitoring long-term impacts, and exploring additional innovative ways to engage the broader student body.

Handling Disclosure Training

Twenty-three key staff members with student facing roles participated in specialised disclosure training for incidents of sexual violence and harassment (SVH). These individuals, who regularly interact with students, were strategically selected to ensure that those most likely to receive disclosures are equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond appropriately.

Key aspects of this training were:

- Active listening and communication skills
- Trauma Informed Response
- Confidentiality and boundaries
- Referral to support services
- Selfcare

This training is crucial in creating a safer, more supportive campus environment, as it enables staff to approach disclosures with sensitivity, confidentiality, and a trauma informed perspective. By upskilling these key personnel, the campus fosters a culture of trust and empowerment, ensuring survivors feel heard, validated and guided toward appropriate resources and support.

The initiative not only enhances the institution's ability to address SVH but also strengthens the overall sense of community and safety here in the University of Limerick.

This training was delivered by Gemma McNally, Clinical and Therapeutic Lead, Active*Consent, and Michelle Caulfield, Head of Training and Education, Galway Rape Crisis Centre.

Bystander Intervention Training

As part of the Preparing for Academic success module for first year BA Arts students, and the Be MindfUL programme led by Philip Desmond, Student Support and Engagement Officer, bystander intervention training was delivered to 364 students by Maria healy, Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Manager.

This training equipped participants with the knowledge and skills to recognise, respond to, and safely intervene in situations of concern, such as sexual violence, harassment, or discrimination. By fostering a sense of responsibility and empowering students to act as active bystanders, it promotes a culture of accountability and support within the campus community. The integration of this training into academic and well-being programmes underscores the university's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment, encouraging students to contribute positively to their peers' well-being.

Thank you to Dr Niall Keegan, BA Arts Course Director, and Philip Desmond, Be MindfUL Programme Lead for recognising the value of this training and inviting us to deliver this to their student cohort.

Establishment of SATU Follow Up Outpatients Clinic on Campus

The establishment of a Sexual assault Treatment Unit (SATU) follow up outpatient clinic on campus marks a significant step in addressing the needs of survivors within the University of Limerick and the wider Mid-West region.

This initiative was developed in strong collaboration with SATU Cork, the HR-EDI Office, and the Student Health Centre to provide accessible, survivor centred care. SATU Cork identified a gap in follow-up care, as many individuals from the Mid-West region were not returning for appointments due to travel barriers.

This clinic will be operational once a month on campus with a possibility of becoming a more frequent service depending on needs and resources. By bringing follow-up services directly to campus, the clinic ensures that survivors receive the ongoing support and medical attention they need in a safe convenient location, reinforcing UL's commitment to trauma informed care and community wellbeing.

Awareness Raising Campaigns

In 2024, a number of awareness-raising campaigns were rolled out on campus to promote sexual health, wellbeing, and address issues related to sexual violence and harassment. These campaigns aimed to educate students and staff, challenge stigmas, and foster a culture of respect, consent, and support within the university community.

Through a combination of workshops, events, informational materials, and social media outreach, these initiatives sought to empower individuals with knowledge and resources while encouraging open conversations about these critical topics.



Sexual Violence & Harassment Prevention and Response Manager Maria Healy, pictured with Consent Ambassadors Lucy Edith Kiiza and Shripa Joshi at SHAG Week

By prioritising education and awareness, these initiatives contributed to building a safer, more inclusive campus environment for all.

The awareness raising campaign included several impactful initiatives throughout the year:

- **SHAG Week (Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance Week):** At the invitation of Student Life in February we had an information stand focused on promoting sexual health education, providing free contraception and raising awareness around the trainings and support services available in UL.
- **Denim Day:** In April, for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a global movement was brought to campus to raise awareness about victim-blaming and support survivors of sexual violence, encouraging students and staff to wear denim as a symbol of solidarity.

This was a collaborative initiative with Mary Immaculate College and Technological University Shannon, led by UL.



Staff and students across the university took part in Denim Day to support survivors of sexual violence

- **Flourish Fest:** Once again we were back in the Student Courtyard in October at the invitation of Student Life promoting healthy relationships and a culture of consent through engaging activities and materials, and peer education.

Our student ambassadors played a pivotal role in connecting with students, using their peer perspective to foster trust, relatability, and meaningful dialogue.



Green Flags activity to promote conversation round health relationships. Caoilainn Moulton, Student Ambassador; Alex Carroll Tully, Student Ambassador; Chloe Nagle, HREDI Office



Student Ambassadors Helena Colpaert; Chloe Nagle (HREDI Office); Alex Carroll Tully; Wiktorina Sedek; Charlotte Balfe; Shone Thomas

Gender Equality

Inclusive Campus

Diversity & Inclusion

Sexual Health & Wellbeing



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