

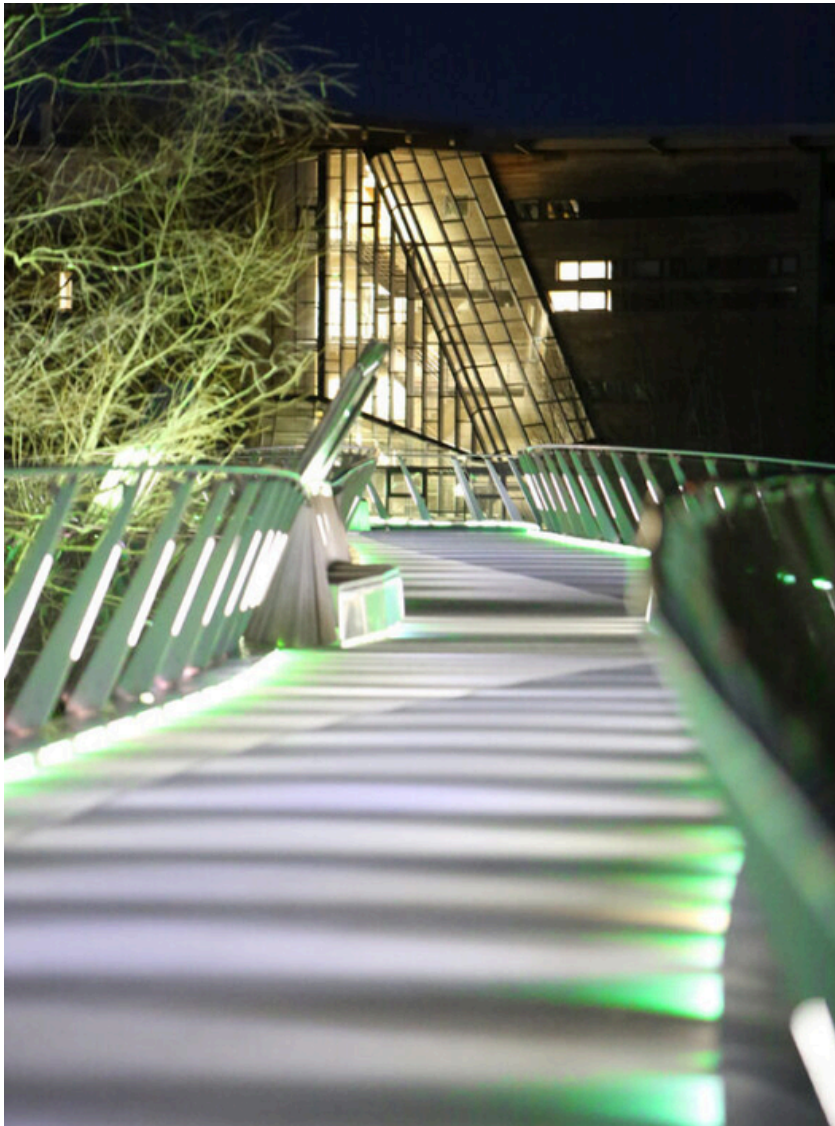
# EHS EDI BULLETIN



UNIVERSITY OF  
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OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Education and  
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# EDI Survey



The Athena Swan Charter is a framework which is used across the globe to **support and transform gender equality** within higher education and research. It's focus has recently broadened from just gender to include the wider equality grounds and the award is **linked to institutional eligibility for funding from Ireland's major research agencies.**

## Athena Swan in EHS ...

**All six Departments and Schools in EHS currently hold a bronze Athena Swan award.**

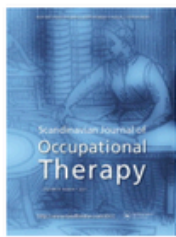
In 2022, the Faculty EDI Committee made a decision to streamline the Athena Swan award application process to avoid inefficiencies, duplication and harness resources effectively. The process is now consolidated at Faculty level with the ambitious target of achieving the **Athena Swan Silver Award.**

## Athena Swan EHS Silver Survey ...

As part of this application process, an **EDI survey** is being undertaken among all EHS staff. This survey is a central element of our application process as it allows us to consult and hear from you on the EDI related issues and concerns that affect you in your work. By taking part in this survey, you are helping us to identify areas of strength, but more importantly, areas for improvement in **your School or Department.** All responses will be anonymous, confidential and used for the purposes of informing our silver application and equality work.



We need to hear from **you** about your personal experience of working in your Department or School or Office, and the impact, if any, of EDI initiatives on your working environment, sense of inclusiveness and belonging, and work-life balance. **Click or zoom in on QR code to access the survey.**



Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy



*An interesting contribution to the ongoing debate about gender imbalance in the health professions.*

*Co-authored by Patrick Hynes, School of Allied Health.*

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: [www.tandfonline.com/journals/iocc20](http://www.tandfonline.com/journals/iocc20)

## Occupational therapy gender imbalance; revisiting a lingering issue

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Recently, it has been suggested that gender disparity in Occupational Therapy has to do with segregated gendered job norms that position female dominated professions as a 'step down' for many males. Interestingly, this suggestion was not underpinned by experiences of males in the profession.

**Aims and Methods:** Thirteen male Occupational Therapists with a variety of backgrounds were invited to this Round Table research, focussing on the broader issue of the existing gender imbalance in Occupational Therapy.

**Results:** Two themes emerged: *'The core values of the profession'*, and *'Broadening the scope of the profession'*; none of them suggesting that male/female imbalance was necessarily the most pressing issue.

**Conclusions:** A gender-unrelated approach to everyday problem-solving was put forward to achieve increased diversity in Occupational Therapists' backgrounds, better reflecting the people they serve. By broadening the scope and the way the profession is presented, and encouraging innovative and more entrepreneurially driven approaches, diversity in the workforce could be further facilitated. These findings are discussed within the context of 'The mutual constitution of cultures and selves' model.

**Significance:** Diversity in the Occupational therapy workforce could be further facilitated with a shift in focus away from the male/female perspective to an intersectional approach.

*Authors: Martin Karaba Bäckströma, Andre Luiz Moura de Castroa, Aaron M. Eakmanb, Moses N. Ikiuguc, Nigel Gribbled, Eric Asabae, Anders Kottorpg, Olov Falkmerh, Mona Eklunda, Nils Erik Nessi, Stefan Baloghj, Patrick Hynes and Torbjörn Falkme.*



*"... the socially constructed perceptions of a job as 'masculine' can be subject to gender re-segregation, in which remuneration and status decline as more women enter work that has traditionally been dominated by men. Yet, it is not as likely that wages and status will rise as rapidly if men go into work traditionally dominated by women. Moreover, even when quotas are introduced and strategic recruitment to facilitate a more even distribution of men and women in professions are put into practice, gendered stereotypes can persist"*

The **School of Allied Health (SAH)** Practice Education team held their Annual Symposium for placement partners in January of this year. The theme of the event was **Equality Diversity and Inclusion in Practice Education**. The event was attended by over 80 delegates who support SAH students on clinical placements.

With a practical focus in mind, the morning speakers discussed topics ranging from cultural inclusion to experiences of neurodiversity from the perspective of students and educators.

The afternoon workshops used simulation-based scenarios to explore EDI issues on placement, considering issues such as gender identity and disability supports. Any queries can be directed to the committee chairperson Marie O'Donnell.

[Marie.ODonnell@ul.ie](mailto:Marie.ODonnell@ul.ie)



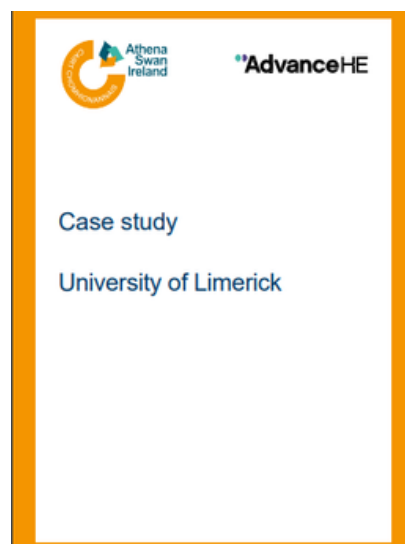
The EHS EDI Forum is a chance to raise and discuss EDI issues in a relatively informal setting. It is open to all EHS Faculty members. Topics are set and promoted in advance to encourage maximum participation.

The **EHS EDI Forums** have proven to be an effective discussion and consultative forum to date. **A total of four** have been held over the past year with participation encouraged both in person via Teams and through the online comment tool (Padlet). This has resulted in significant engagement from EHS staff.

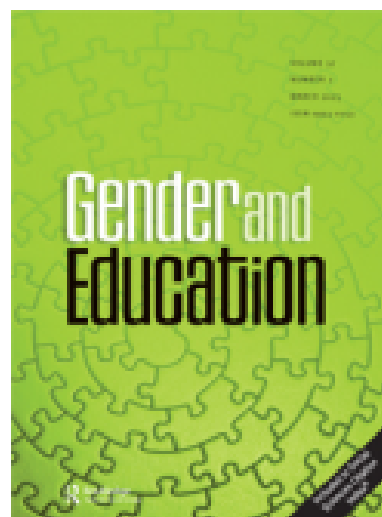
**Discussion papers** have been prepared following each session and these have been used to advocate on the issues and suggestions raised in the Forums. Some positive developments :

- The feedback from the PMSS Promotion Pathway Forum has been fed into the **UL Job Evaluation Review Group**, currently examining the Job Evaluation Process.
- The feedback from the Timetabling Forum is being fed into the **UL Timetabling Project Steering Committee**.

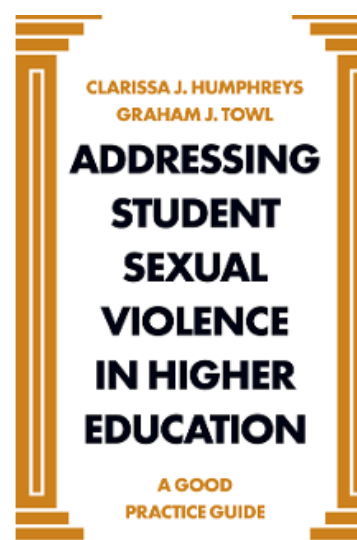
As part of the **Athena Swan 10th year celebrations in Ireland**, held in the University of Limerick on January 30th this year, a series of Case Studies were produced showcasing good practice in gender equality initiatives across higher education institutions in Ireland, including the University of Limerick.



A paper recently published exploring the challenges related to the **teaching of gender equality in Irish secondary schools**. Dr.Sarah Arnold & Izzy Fox from Maynooth University note the challenges include: insufficient gender equality training for teachers; tendencies towards conservative and religious ethos schools; lack of space in which to address gender topics in the curriculum and, especially, growing resistance to gender equality and gender mainstreaming from a variety of stakeholders including schools, teachers, parents and students.



This good practice guide, published in March 2025, provides **how-to level information** on staffing, policy writing, responding to disclosures, developing comprehensive prevention and response education programmes, conducting trauma-informed investigations, adjudication and sanctioning processes and offering sanctioning guidelines for sexual violence.



# EDI Events



- [Dignity and Respect Policy & Procedures for Students and Employees](#)
- [Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy](#)
- [Sexual Violence and Harassment \(SVH\) Policy for Students and Staff](#)

The launch of the **RespectFUL Campus Campaign** took place on March 5th. The ‘Safe Spaces, Strong Voices’ message promotes inclusivity, and strives to prevent discrimination, bullying and sexual violence and harassment. It ensures access to essential support services for all members of the UL Community - students, employees, and other service users.

The campaign is a joint initiative between HR and the HREDI office with a **special landing page now on the UL website**. It signposts relevant policies, training and supports that are available.

**Support services** are available to assist those affected, ensuring they feel heard, valued, and empowered.



Speakers at the launch of the RespectFUL campaign.  
Photo Credit: Alan Pace



Policies and supports



Training



RespectFUL Campus Launch Event



Funding is available from the EHS Faculty to support the hosting of EDI related events throughout the year. This is a rolling call for the EHS EDI Fund. Click on image to apply.

Some personnel updates on our EDI Committee and Team ...

- Dr. Petra Elftorp, School of Education has been appointed Assistant Dean of EDI in the Faculty.
- Dr. Sandra O'Brien has taken on the Chair of the Department of Psychology EDI Committee.
- Brigette Moody, PESS, has stepped down from the EDI Committee.

We thank all our departing colleagues for their work, committment and energy to the EDI cause and wish them well on their next chapter. We thank our new members for taking up the mantle and look forward to working with them!

## EHS Emerging and Early Career Researchers Seed Funding Call 2025

The EHS Research Committee has launched the **2025 EHS Seed Fund for Emerging and Early Career Researchers**. Funding of between €500 and €7,500 is available to support applications across the four EHS research priority areas (a) Optimising Health (b) Physical Activity and Human Performance (c) Professional Practice and Education (d) Social Inclusion. Further information on application requirements is available [here](#) and closing date is 12th May.

### Event Information

**Date:** 28 May 2025

**Place:** Maynooth University, Ireland

→ [Book now](#)

### Call For Papers ...

Advance HE's Ireland 2025 Symposium entitled '**From Vision to Strategy: Academic Leadership for Transformational Learning and Teaching**' is taking place at Maynooth University on **28th May, 2025**.

This symposium will focus on the vital role of academic leaders in shaping an excellent higher education system—one that meets the needs of students, employers, and society.

Contributions to this discussion are sought through oral presentations, reflective accounts, and workshops.

**Submission deadline is the 24th March** and further details on calls can be found [here](#).

