

Human Rights EDI Strategy



University of Limerick Human
Rights EDI Strategy 2023 – 2027



This strategy has been developed and approved by the **University of Limerick's Human Rights, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee** using templates developed by the Irish Universities Association. The development & stakeholder consultation was facilitated by **Niall Crowley of Value Labs**. Document was designed in conjunction with **Saol**.

The electronic version of this document on the UL Human Rights, Equality Diversity website is the latest version.
Contact edi@ul.ie



www.ul.ie/sustainability

**Human Rights,
Equality Diversity and
Inclusion Committee**

www.ul.ie/equality-diversity-inclusion



www.values-lab.ie

Saol

www.studiosaol.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

07	Egalitarian University
09	Implementation of the Duty: Introduction
11	Identified Groups & Functional Areas

Values Statement

15	Introduction
17	Social Justice
18	Empowerment
19	Inclusivity
20	Agency
21	Respect

Assessment

25	Introduction
27	Respect
29	Inclusivity
31	Social Justice
33	Empowerment
34	Agency

Enabling Implementation

37	Leadership
37	Capacity
38	Monitoring Progress
38	Communication
38	Linkages for Coherence & Collaboration
39	Theory of Change

Implementation

43	Address Step
44	Targeted Actions
45	Portfolio of Actions
46	Mainstreaming Equality & Human Rights
46	Reporting

Appendices

49	Action Plans
49	Strategies and Policies
51	HREDI Committee Membership
51	Working Group Membership
55	Sustainability Framework

01 Introduction





“I am delighted to formally launch the institution’s Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023 - 2027.”



Professor Kerstin Mey
President
University of Limerick

Foreword from the President, University of Limerick - Professor Kerstin Mey

I am delighted to formally launch the institution's Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027.

University of Limerick (UL) is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) committed to ensuring equal opportunities and outcomes in rights, respect, representation, recognition and resources for all its students and university staff. Grounded in values such as social justice, agency, inclusivity, empowerment, and respect, this university actively seeks to dismantle barriers and biases in every facet of our work, from admissions and academia to staffing and governance.

By embedding a commitment to goals of equality and inclusion within our structures, procedures and practices, the university fosters an environment where diverse identities are celebrated and accommodated and thrive across all the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community, and socio-economic status.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (Section 42 (1)) mandates that a public body like UL must take measures to eradicate discrimination, foster equality of opportunity and fair treatment. The university must safeguard the human rights of our community, encompassing members, staff, students, and those who we provide services to.

In UL, we aim to surpass the basic requirements of the duty by aligning our objectives in human rights, equality, diversity and inclusion with our overarching strategic and sustainability goals. In doing so, we ensure that our five core values serve as the driving force behind our organisational culture. I firmly believe that adopting a values-led approach enhances and builds on the strong traditions and principles deeply ingrained within our institution. As the leader of this remarkable institution, I take

immense pride in our accomplishments so far. UL has set a significant milestone in Irish Higher Education by being awarded with the prestigious Silver Athena Swan Institution award in March 2023, a remarkable achievement as the first institution in the sector and internationally outside of the UK to achieve such an accolade. This accomplishment reflects not only our enduring dedication to the promotion of gender equality across our institution but also our successful implementation of initiatives that have produced meaningful results within the broader Human Rights – EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) framework.

My vision for UL is to rebalance social progress within environmental constraints and become a truly egalitarian university. Within our Sustainability Framework, which can be accessed at www.ul.ie/sustainability, we have set out our commitment to becoming an egalitarian university by 2030. An Egalitarian University is one that is fully dedicated to guaranteeing equity in terms of rights, respect, representation, recognition for all its students and university staff.

Our mission of egalitarianism is dedicated to advocating for equal opportunities, rights and representation across all levels of our institution. We are unwavering in our commitment to celebrating diversity and fostering an environment where every member can thrive, regardless of their backgrounds. Our core values of social justice, inclusivity, agency, respect and empowerment serve as the foundation for our actions. The university diligently adheres to the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, engaging in continuous assessment, taking action and transparently reporting our progress as we work towards these goals. With thanks to the support of our Governing Authority in its approval for this strategy, we commit to regularly reporting the progress of this work and the implementation of Duty.

Finally, on behalf of the governance bodies within UL I am personally committed to fully integrating Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into our structures and policies, procedures and processes, actions, and culture and to dedicating resources to achieve this pivotal goal.

Head of Athena Swan Ireland presents the Athena Swan Silver award

Sarah Fink presents the Athena Swan Silver Award to President Kerstin Mey and Dr Marie Connolly, Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and leader of the institution application.



Pride Month

The Pride Flag raised outside Plassey House to highlight Pride Month across the campus.



Public signing of HEA's Anti Racism Principles

Dr Jennie Rothwell, Head of the HEA Centre of Excellence for EDI, President Kerstin Mey and Laura Austin, Senior Executive Officer, HEA Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.



Consent Orientation Stand Sept 2023

Maria Healy, UL's Sexual Harassment & Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Officer at Orientation week for new UL undergraduate students

Foreword from the Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion - Dr, Marie Connolly

I am honoured to join President Professor Kerstin Mey in presenting the University of Limerick's (UL) Human Rights, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (HREDI) Strategy for the years 2023-2027. This strategic document outlines UL's commitment to upholding the principles of Human Rights and EDI for our staff, students, visitors, and service users within the higher education community. Building upon the foundation laid by our previous Equality and Human Rights Strategy (2019-2022), this new strategy delineates our vision and objectives for HREDI over the next three years. It also underscores our dedication to creating a workplace and learning environment grounded in five fundamental values: Social Justice, Empowerment, Inclusivity, Agency, and Respect. These values underpin our mission to promote equality and human rights, dismantle barriers, and engage in positive actions in the realms of employment, education, and learning provision, especially for the identified groups. Our approach builds upon the deep-rooted values and traditions inherent in our institution.

The establishment of the Human Rights, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Office in March 2021 marked a pivotal moment in our commitment to HREDI. We identified four key pillars for implementing HREDI within the institution: Gender Equality, Universal Design for Learning/Accessibility; Diversity & Inclusion; and Sexual Health & Wellbeing. To ensure comprehensive coverage, we formed numerous working groups under each of these pillars, aligning their efforts with the overarching HREDI focus. We strived to include representation from each group on the HREDI Steering Committee. For any pillars lacking working groups, new ones were established to address those gaps.

In January 2022, we restructured the HREDI Steering Group, nominating the Provost/Deputy President as the chair and my role as the co-chair. This restructuring aimed to ensure that all key decision-makers within the institution played an

active role. In January 2023, a HREDI Working Group was established within this committee, further ensuring representation from all identified groups. This extensive collaboration and consultation with the stakeholders and working groups have been instrumental in shaping what I believe is a robust strategy. This strategy will undergo continuous review throughout its lifespan to maintain flexibility and responsiveness to evolving needs, aligning with our responsibilities as a public sector entity under the requirements of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 Section 42 (1), "Assess, Address, and Report."

As President Mey has articulated, UL's overarching goal is to become a truly egalitarian university by 2030. We are firmly committed to providing equal opportunities and outcomes in rights, respect, representation, recognition, and resources for all students and university staff. Grounded in values such as social justice, agency, inclusivity, empowerment, and respect, this university actively seeks to dismantle barriers and biases across all aspects, from admissions and academia to staffing and governance (UL's HREDI Mission). This strategy is a fundamental part of our commitment to achieving the institution's Sustainability Goals as outlined in the UL Sustainability Framework 2030 and aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Gender Equality (Goal 4), Reduced Inequalities (Goal 10), and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (Goal 16). I would like to personally express my gratitude to the members of the HREDI Office, the HREDI working group members (listed on page 54), and all those who contributed significantly to the development of this strategy. I extend a special thanks to Mr. Niall Crowley of Values Lab, whose expert guidance was invaluable in shaping this strategy. Niall's extensive knowledge and experience as an HREDI consultant greatly enriched this process. My sincere thanks also go to the team at Studio Saol, our strategic design partners, whose support was generously provided through the Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation.

Egalitarian University

is a HEI committed to ensuring equal opportunities and outcomes in rights, respect, representation, recognition and resources for all its students and university staff. Grounded in values such as social justice, agency, inclusivity, empowerment, and respect, this university actively seeks to dismantle barriers and biases in every facet, from admissions and academia to staffing and governance.

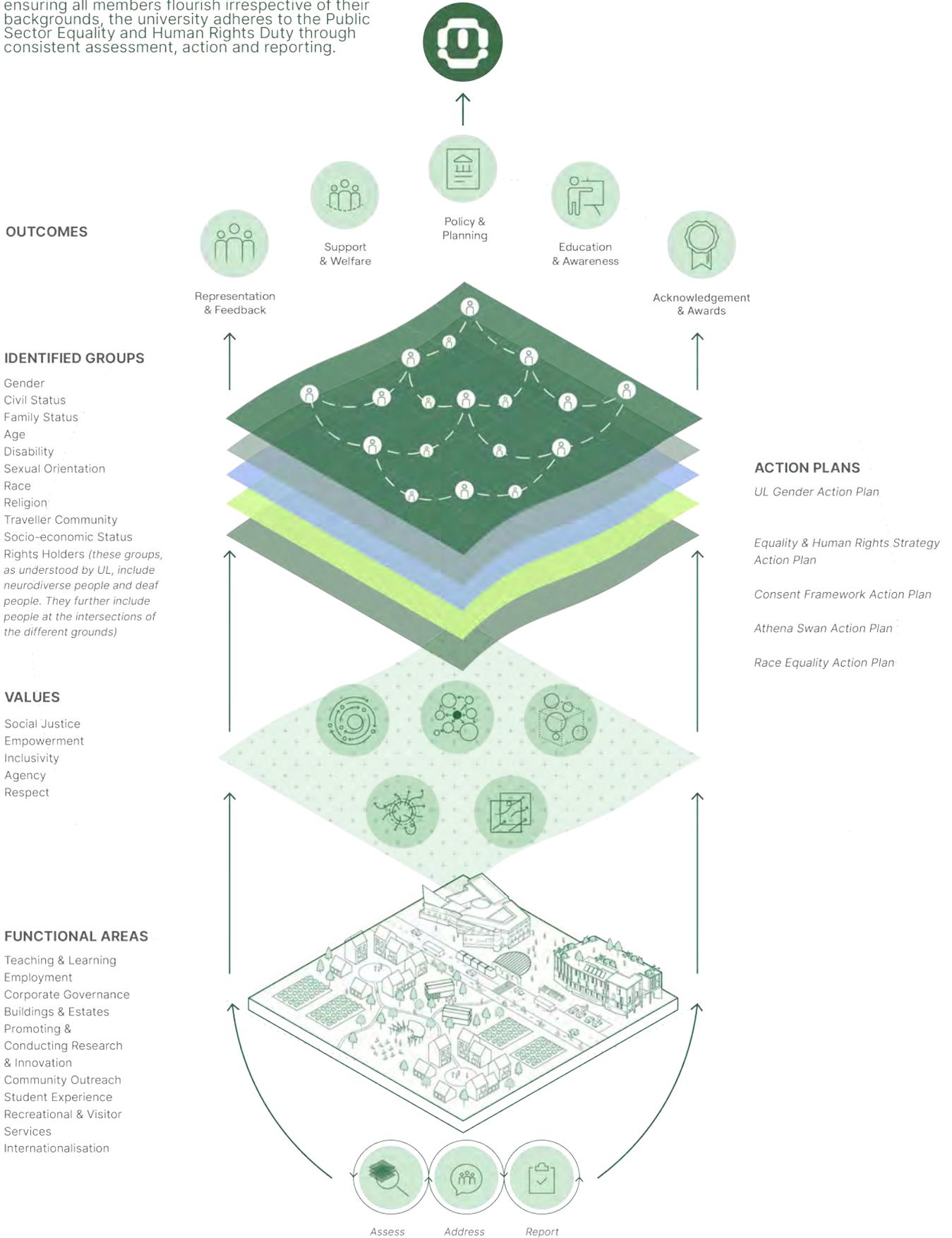
By embedding a commitment to goals of equality and inclusion within its structures and practices, the university fosters an environment where diverse identities are celebrated and accommodated and thrive across all the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community, and socio-economic status.

Adhering to the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, through a process of assessment, addressing and reporting, UL aspires to embed ambitions, systems and practices for equality and human rights across the entire institution driven by the mission of becoming an egalitarian university by 2030.

Egalitarian University

Rooted in the values of social justice, inclusivity, agency, respect and empowerment, UL's Egalitarian University mission champions equal opportunities, rights and representation across all levels while actively addressing barriers in admissions, academia and governance.

With a commitment to celebrating diversity and ensuring all members flourish irrespective of their backgrounds, the university adheres to the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty through consistent assessment, action and reporting.



Implementation of the Duty: Introduction

This implementation plan establishes the ambition and approach of University of Limerick to implementing the public sector equality and human rights duty (the Duty), and is compliant with Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014: the public sector equality and human rights duty (the Duty).

The Duty requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights for service users, policy beneficiaries, and employees, across all their functions.

Section 42.1 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 sets out the Duty:

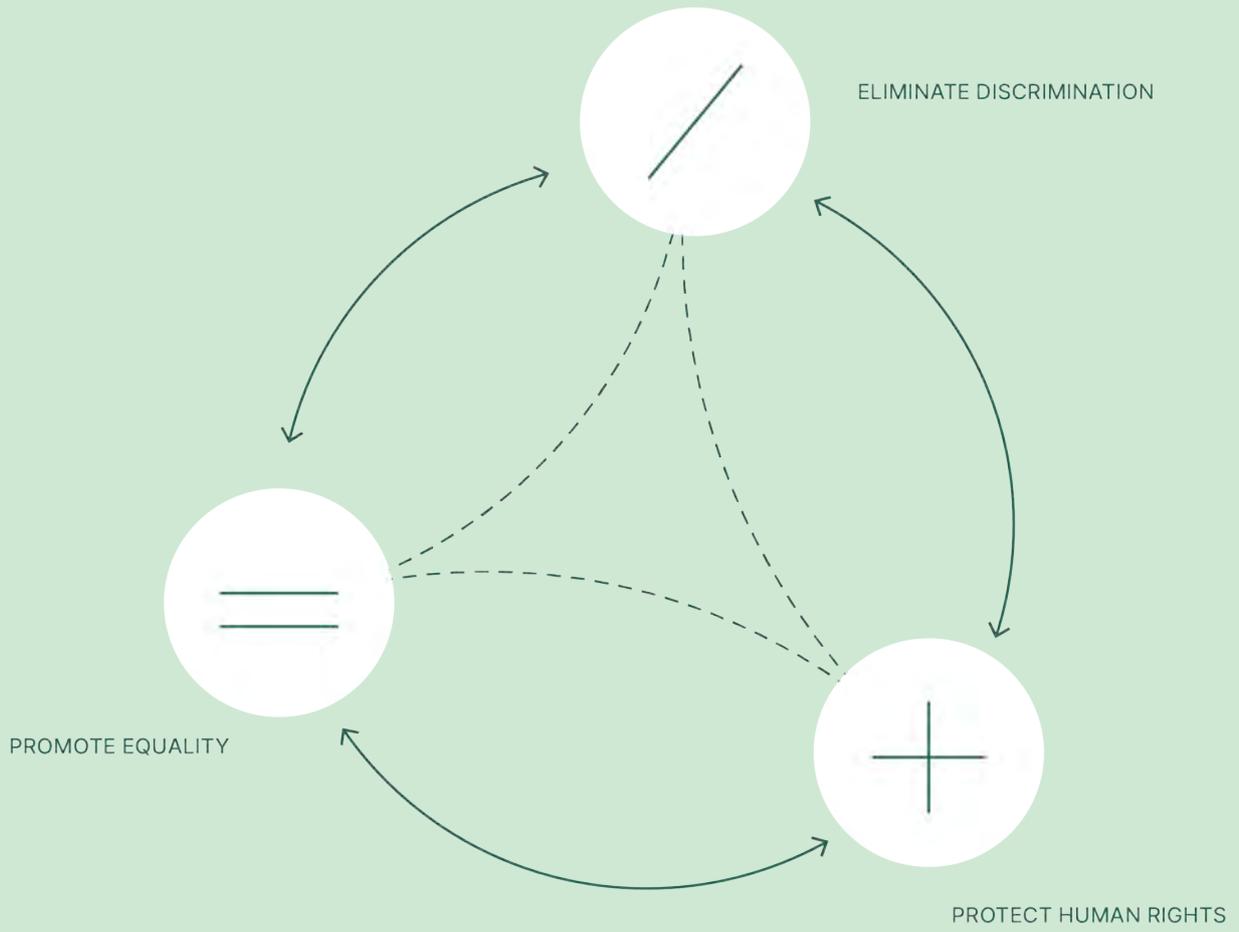
A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services; and
- Protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

To give effect to the Duty, public bodies are required to: undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights issues facing the identified groups for the Duty that would have a relevance for the functions of that public body; identify the steps being taken or proposed, to address the issues as assessed; and report annually on the progress in addressing these issues and implementing the Duty.

S42.2 lays out the three key steps that public bodies should follow, in regard to giving effect to the Duty:

- Set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan (howsoever described) an **assessment** of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to **address** those issues, and
- **Report** in a manner that is accessible to the public on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report (howsoever described).



Identified Groups and Functional Areas

The **identified groups** for Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty are those covered under equal treatment legislation.

These groups, as understood by UL, include neurodiverse people and deaf people. They further include people at the intersections of the different grounds.

The Duty covers the grounds of:

- gender (defined under the Acts as being male or female and understood by UL to include gender identity, gender expression and intersex status (The European Court of Justice has held that discrimination against a transsexual person constitutes discrimination on the ground of sex);
- civil status (defined under the Acts as being single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, or in a civil partnership);
- family status (defined under the Acts as being pregnant or having responsibility as a parent in relation to a person under 18 years, or as a parent or the resident primary carer in relation to an adult with a disability who needs care or support on a continuing, regular or frequent basis);
- age (defined under the Acts as applying to everybody over 18 (except in relation to the provision of motor insurance to drivers aged under 18));
- disability (defined under the Acts as covering a wide range of impairments, all physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities, as well as illnesses),
- sexual orientation (defined under the Acts as being heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual, and understood by UL to include the full spectrum of sexual orientations);
- race (defined under the Acts as including race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins);
- religion (defined under the Acts as having religious beliefs or having none; where 'religious belief' includes religious background or outlook);
- membership of the Traveller community (defined under the Acts as people who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified by both Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as having a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland).

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission has established two further identified groups for the Duty in relation to:

- socio-economic status (understood as those people at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion); and
- rights holders under the various human rights instruments.

The full range of functions of University of Limerick encompasses:

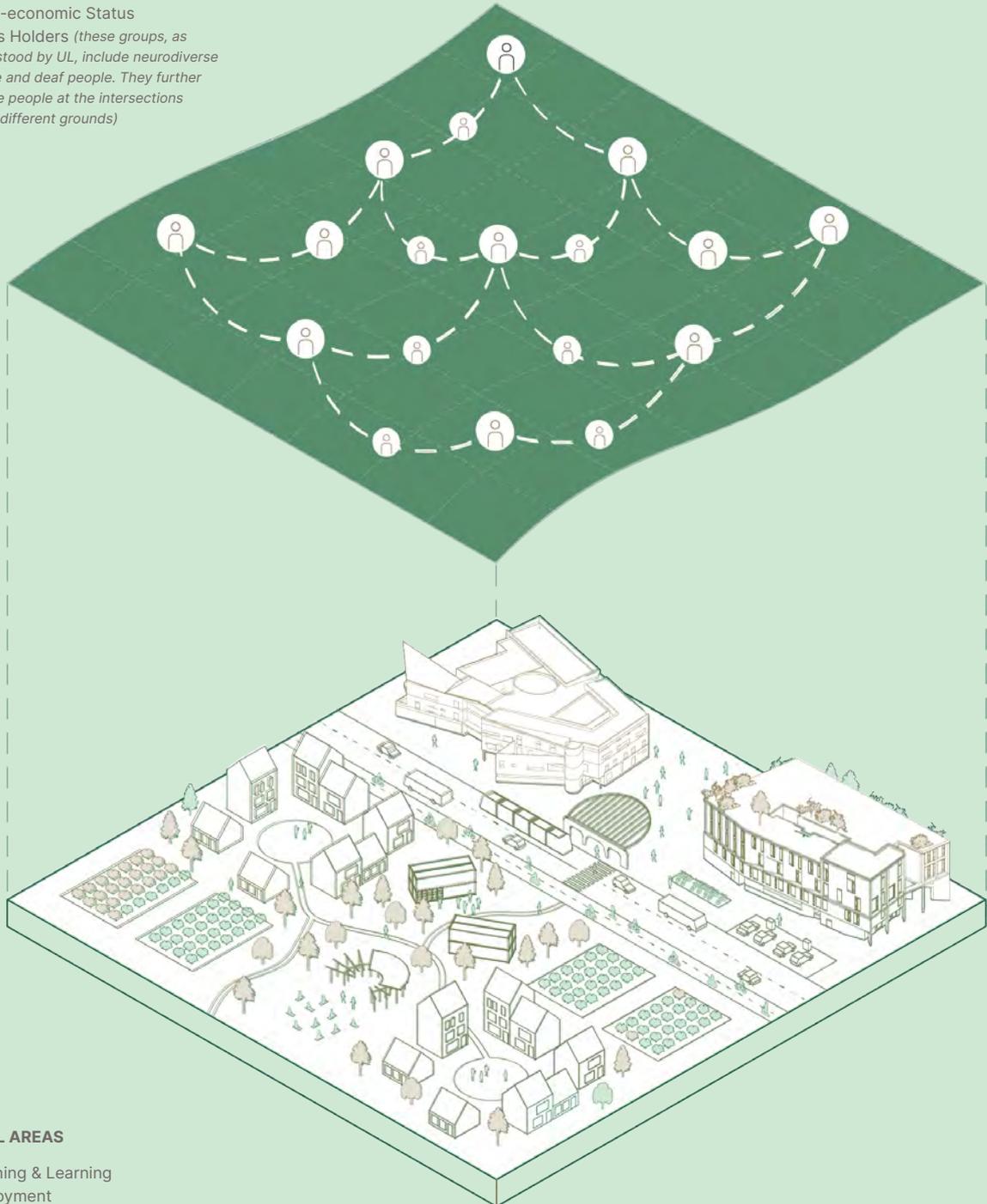
- teaching and learning
- employment
- corporate governance
- buildings and estates
- promoting and conducting research and innovation
- community outreach
- student experience
- recreational and visitor services
- internationalisation.

Reference

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

IDENTIFIED GROUPS

Gender
Civil Status
Family Status
Age
Disability
Sexual Orientation
Race
Religion
Traveller Community
Socio-economic Status
Rights Holders *(these groups, as understood by UL, include neurodiverse people and deaf people. They further include people at the intersections of the different grounds)*



FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Teaching & Learning
Employment
Corporate Governance
Buildings & Estates
Promoting & Conducting Research & Innovation
Community Outreach
Student Experience
Recreational & Visitor Services
Internationalisation

02 Values Statement





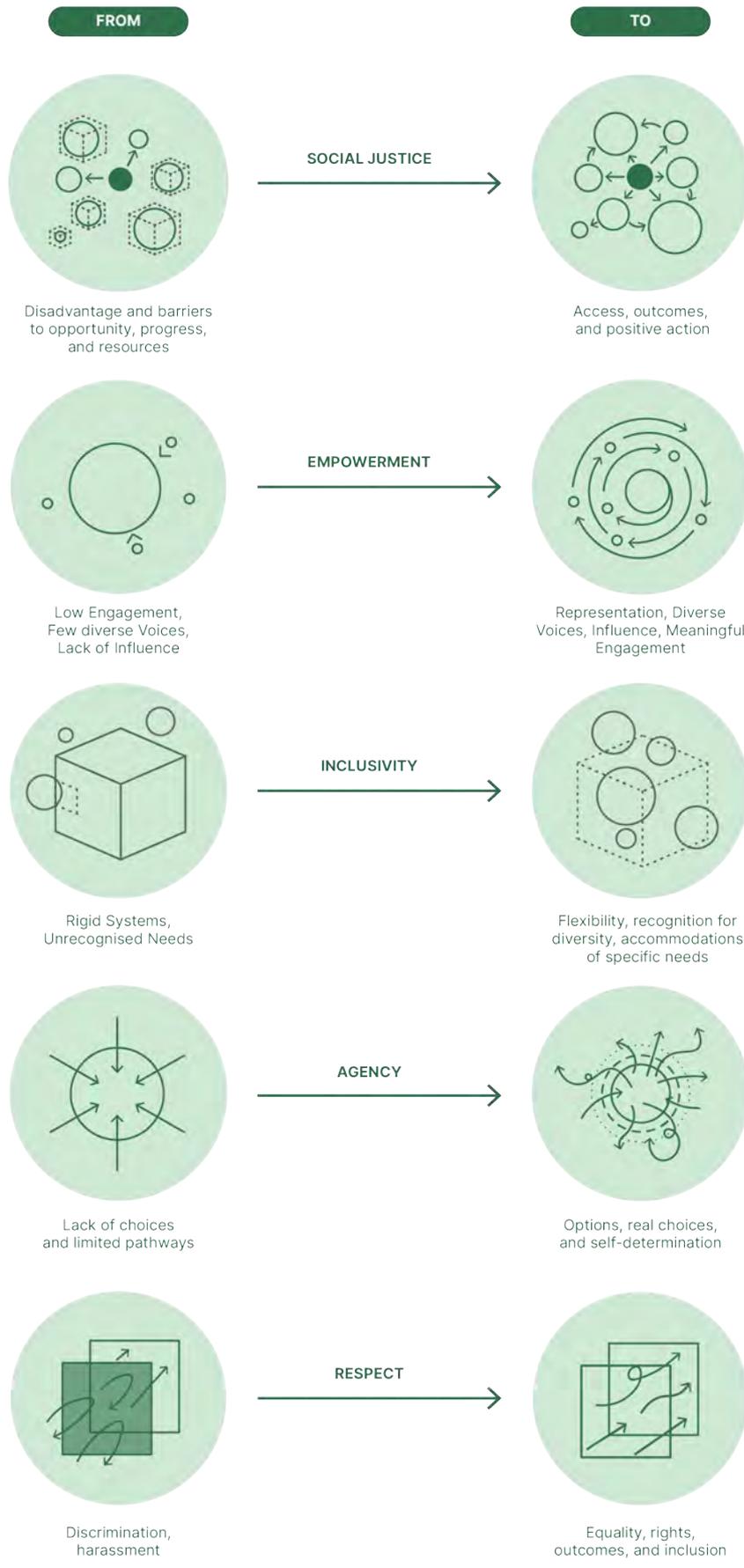
Introduction

This equality and human rights values statement has been developed to provide a frame within which to implement the Duty and to set out benchmarks that capture our ambition for implementing the Duty and this equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy. It enables a comprehensive approach to the Duty and serves to support an ongoing alignment with our ambitions for the Duty. It draws from and is coherent with our wider corporate values.

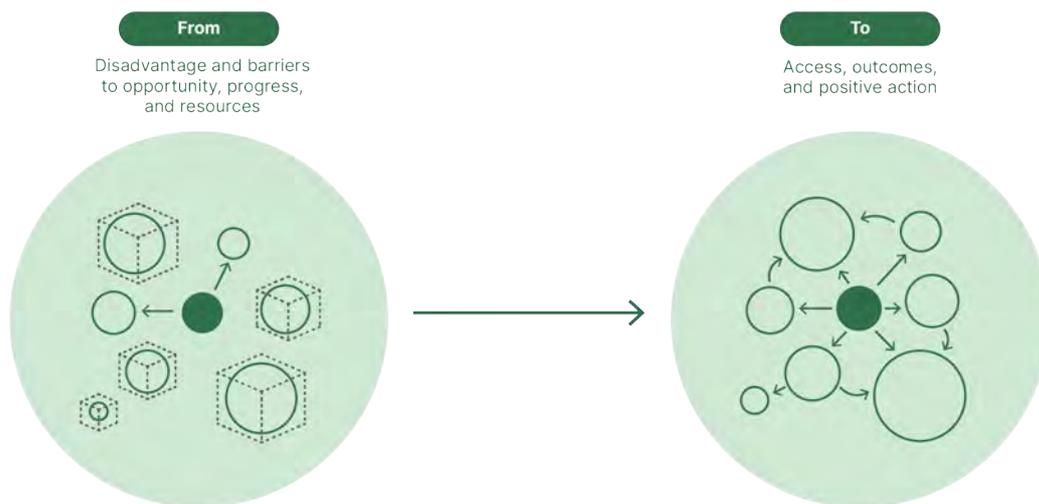
The values identified in this statement are those that motivate our concern for equality and human rights. Five core values are identified: social justice; empowerment; inclusivity; agency; and respect.

For each of these values a brief shared understanding of this value is set out along with two benchmarks:

a statement of outcome: the implications of the value for the change sought and priorities pursued by the university across its various functions; and
a statement of process: the implications of the value for the way the university works in pursuing this change and its various priorities.



Social Justice

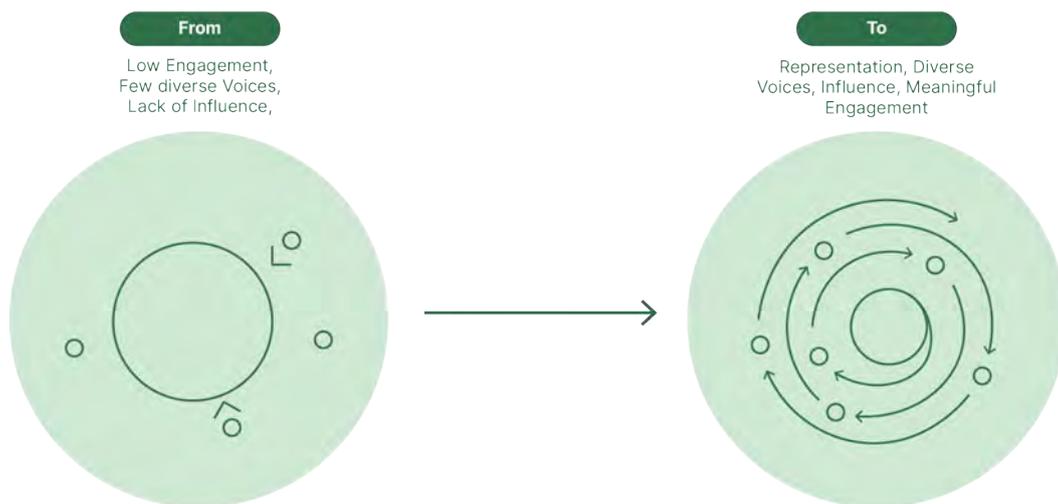


Social Justice is about resources, opportunities and capabilities to flourish, involving action to enable achievement of outcomes.

STATEMENT OF OUTCOME: This university will: enable greater access to, retention in, and outcomes from higher education for the identified groups; offer employment opportunities and enable their career progression within the sector; and contribute to a wider societal achievement of such goals by challenging injustice, building a knowledge base on the issues, and promoting innovation in addressing equality and human rights issues in society.

STATEMENT OF PROCESS: This university will: remove barriers and engage in positive action for new outcomes in employment, education and learning provision for the identified groups; and work with communities and individuals from the identified groups to lead a societal and institutional conversation on equality and human rights issues and ambitions.

Empowerment

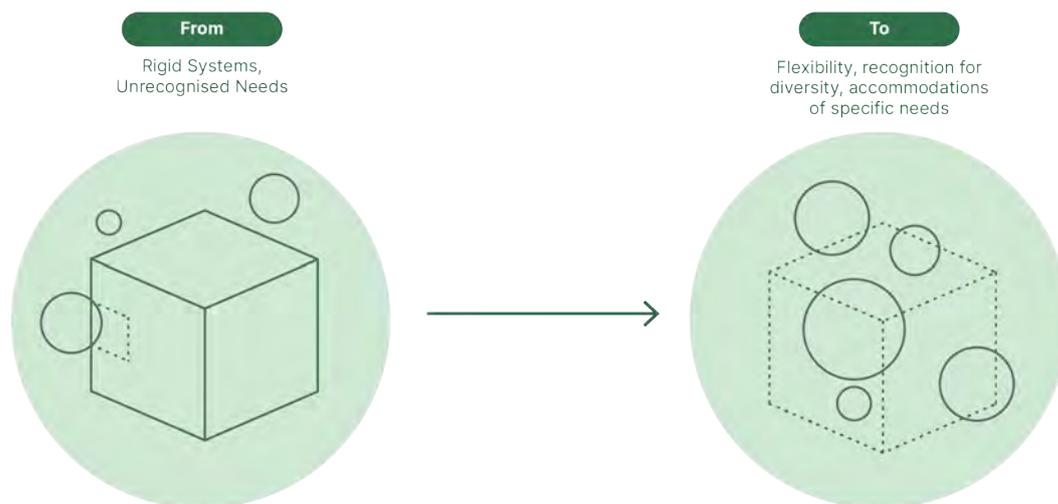


Empowerment is about engaging with and enabling a diversity of voices at the level of the collective, involving this diversity being listened to and heard, with positive attention to their different viewpoints, and having influence and a meaningful engagement in decision-making processes.

STATEMENT OF OUTCOME: This university will: ensure adequate representation at decision-making tables, and within structures that influence and inform policy and plans for the identified groups; and ensure the voice of the diversity of staff and students is heard and has meaningful impact and influence in driving change.

STATEMENT OF PROCESS: This university will: work in partnership with relevant organisations and groups that bring forward the perspective of the identified groups; take participatory approaches across our work, including in research; empower relevant staff networks and student associations; and consult with the identified groups and act on their feedback.

Inclusivity

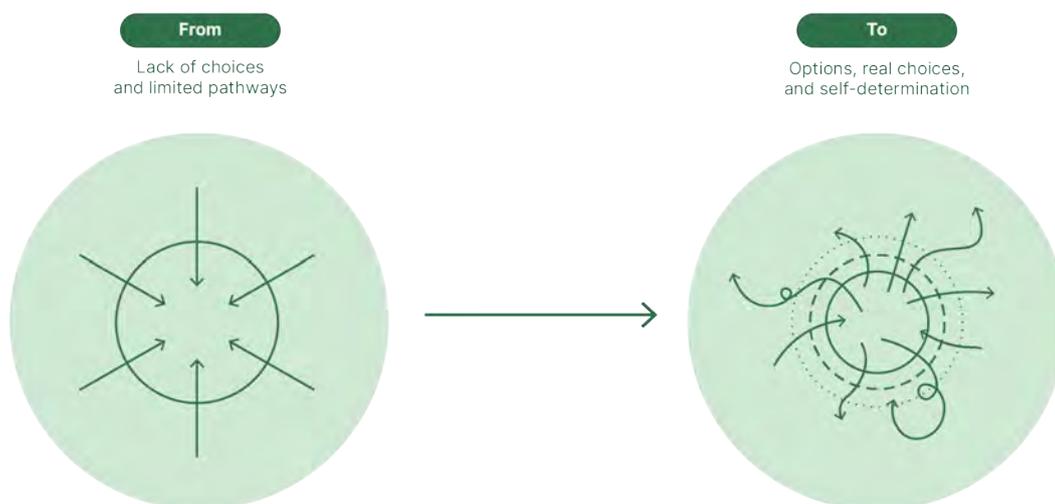


Inclusivity is about valuing and respecting diversity, achieving a sense of belonging, and being person-centred, involving proactive and mainstream processes of universal design and recognition for and flexibility in addressing specific needs and in recognising specific strengths.

STATEMENT OF OUTCOME: This university will innovate to develop and operationalise models of good practice in mainstreaming a focus on diversity, thus ensuring our general provision and systems address the specific needs of people from across the identified groups and accommodate the particular needs that arise from their diversity.

STATEMENT OF PROCESS: This university will implement systems that are flexible in valuing and taking account of diversity, for staff and students, and that enable and support their full and effective participation, and that engender a sense of belonging, where people can give full expression to their different identities while progressing their aspirations to full effect.

Agency

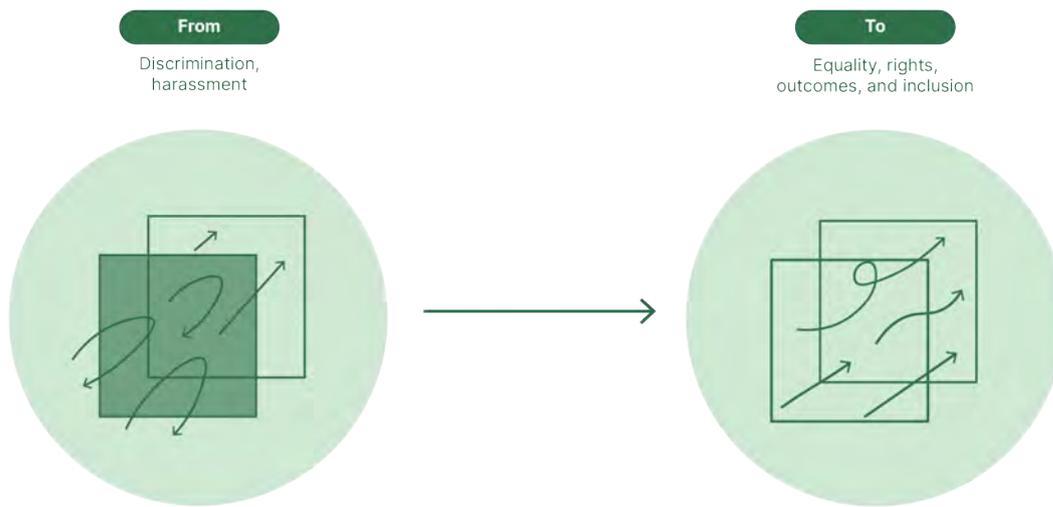


Agency is about autonomy, choice, and self-determination at the level of the individual, involving availability of, and access to a range of options to enable this.

STATEMENT OF OUTCOME: This university will offer options that enable real choice for people across the identified groups, in particular, pathways into and within higher education, and employment pathways and career progression.

STATEMENT OF PROCESS: This university will enable and empower informed choices by people from the identified groups, remove barriers to the making and realisation of these choices, and ensure processes of assessment that include for real choices in the pathways they open up for them.

Respect



Respect is about dignity, human worth, and care, involving fair treatment, a safe environment, fulfilling the right to privacy, and valuing people.

STATEMENT OF OUTCOME: This university will: establish an organisational culture of equality and human rights; form a community based on respect, fairness and a valuing of diversity; enable relationships of integrity based on collaboration and co-design; and offer societal leadership, knowledge and innovation in protecting human rights and preventing and addressing all forms of discrimination.

STATEMENT OF PROCESS: This university will: create safe environments for work and study and build trust, transparency and accountability in these environments; and implement and operate effective and fair systems to deal with all forms of discrimination, harassment, and human rights violations that might arise.



03 Assessment





Introduction

The assessment identifies the issues that face the different groups, that are covered by the Duty and that are relevant to the functions of University of Limerick. **This assessment is not an assessment of University of Limerick nor its performance.** It serves as a tool to implement the Address step of the Duty. The equality and human rights issues assessed as relevant to UL, encompass: issues that are directly actionable by the university; issues that need to be taken into account in the work of the university; and issues that need to be a focus for UL in its role as a voice for change in its wider society.

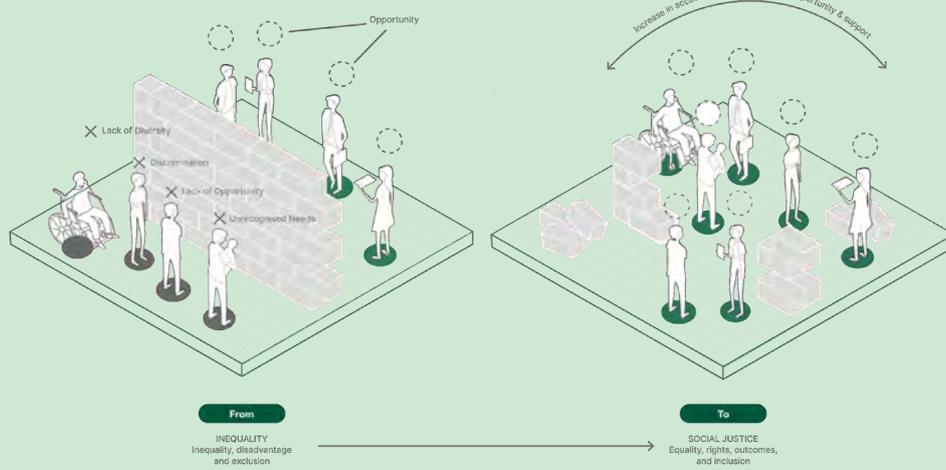
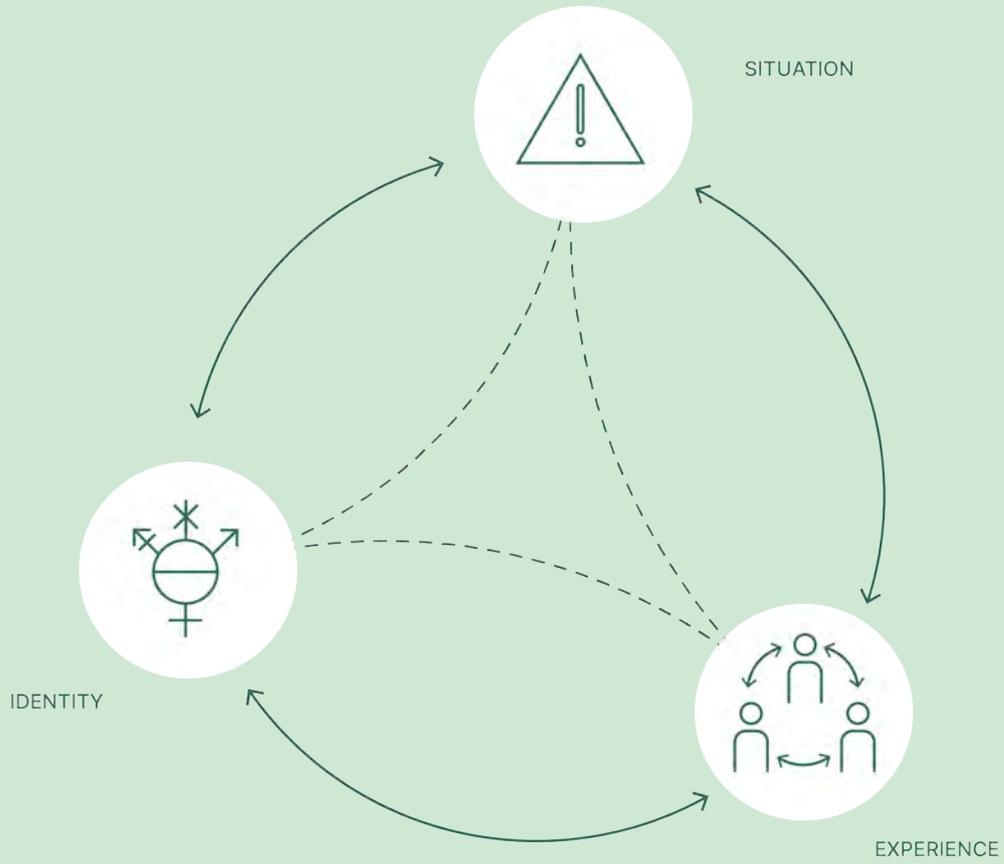
These issues relate to the:

Situation of the group in terms of their access to resources and any particular disadvantage they experience;
Experience of the group in terms of the quality of their interaction with employers and service providers and the wider society; and
Identity of the group in terms of how they choose to give expression to their identity and addressing the specific needs that arise from this.

and specifically when preparing a University of Limerick Strategic Plan. Updates will be based on new data/information becoming available on the situation, experience and identity of the relevant groups, in particular through research initiatives and feedback from stakeholders. Our equality and human values are used as a framework to set out our assessment of the equality and human rights issues relevant to our functions.

This assessment has been compiled from an evidence base of current equality and human rights research and reports from relevant Irish sources. This evidence base is held in a separate document that identifies the specific sources used, and provides key relevant data from each of these sources. This assessment will be updated periodically,

The equality and human rights issues assessed below relate to all of the identified groups unless otherwise indicated. They are presented in the form of an overarching issue that applies across the identified groups, which are then further illustrated with a series of bullet points drawn from the evidence base that are specifically group-focused.



Respect

Respect is about dignity, human worth, and care, involving fair treatment, a safe environment, fulfilling the right to privacy, and valuing people.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to the functional areas of University of Limerick, are:

1. Discrimination of staff and students across the identified groups in accessing and participating in employment and services, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:
 - Comparatively higher levels of discrimination, at the point of recruitment to employment, against negatively racialised people* including Travellers, religious minorities, disabled people, transgender and non-binary people, and older people.
 - Comparatively higher levels of in-work discrimination (e.g. in promotion and other career opportunities) against women, pregnant people, disabled people, negatively racialised people, people from religious minorities, and transgender and non-binary people.
 - Comparatively higher levels of discrimination in accessing and participating in services, including education, experienced by: Travellers, disabled people, lone parents, people from religious minorities, and transgender and gender non-binary people.
 - Comparatively higher levels of being treated as less smart or less capable than others

because of who they are, experienced by female students compared to male students. Younger students also appear to experience this more than older students.

2. Systemic institutionalisation of negative treatment on the basis of identity: ableism; ageism; racism; sexism; sectarianism; homophobia; biphobia; transphobia.
3. Identity-based violence, abuse and harassment of staff and students across the identified groups, which prevents access to and participation in employment and key services, including education, and diminishes engagement in campus spaces and education settings, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:
 - Comparatively higher levels of identity-based harassment and bullying by peers, experienced in education settings by LGBTQIA+ and Traveller students and staff.
 - Micro-aggressions and more direct forms of identity-based harassment experienced in the workplace by LGBTQIA+ people, Travellers, and other minority ethnic groups.
 - Significant levels of racism experienced in public spaces by negatively racialised people, particularly Travellers, Roma and Muslim women.
 - Comparatively higher levels of gender-based violence and abuse experienced by women of all ages, including: intimate partner violence and abuse; sexual harassment and assault; and stalking.
 - In education settings, comparatively higher numbers of female students report that they have experienced sexual harassment at some

point, compared with male students. Female students are more likely to feel unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood and on campus than male counterparts.

- Abuse and neglect of older people.

4. Misportrayal of discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence and harassment due to stereotyping and bias across the identified groups to the extent that blame is misdirected, including onto those who are a target for such

5. Hostile working and learning environments and cultures for staff and students across the identified groups, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- Stigmatisation of people on the basis of: their ethnic background; their religious background; their sexual orientation; their minority gender status; their disability; their social background; their neurodiversity.
- Stereotyping of groups, including: gender stereotypes that restrict subject choice and career routes for girls and boys; stereotyping of students with a disability and Traveller students, resulting in low expectations from teaching staff; stereotyping of older people as being non-contributors to society and lack of opportunities for intergenerational learning.
- Unconscious bias informing decision-making and serving to make the articulation of discrimination more difficult.
- Low expectations of the potential of disabled students and Traveller students.
- Limited understanding and/or capacity of employers and service providers, and of employees and service-users, with regard to equality and human rights issues, including addressing identity-based discrimination, harassment and abuse.
- Negative impact of identity-based bullying, harassment, and abuse (including gender-based violence) including: poor physical and mental health and wellbeing; absence from/being forced to leave education and employment; and self-limiting participation in public and the wider community to avoid victimisation.

6. Inappropriate and problematic nomenclature or categorisation used for the identified groups and lack of definition for an agreed nomenclature that reflects the perspective of the identified groups.

7. Under-reporting of discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and bullying across the identified groups, including in work and in learning environments, due to fears and issues of victimisation, inadequate procedures for receiving and addressing complaints, and lack of information on reporting systems.

8. Lack of knowledge of rights under legislation and capacity to exercise these rights across the identified groups, and lack of meaningful ways to seek redress where these rights are violated, including adequate policies and accessible reporting processes.

9. Lack of preventative measures and inadequate protection for the identified groups from incidents of discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and bullying.

10. Limited or inadequate response, from service providers and employers, to discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and bullying, including lack of or inadequate complaints/investigation mechanisms, failure of or inadequate implementation of these where in place, and lack of accountability for those found to have perpetrated such incidents.

* The term 'negatively racialised people' is used as the preferred terminology to identify those covered under the equality legislation by the ground of race who experience discrimination and racism, including Travellers, who are covered by a distinct ground of membership of the Traveller community. The terminology recognises racialisation as a social process used to establish hierarchical differences, with oppressive impact for those groups that are 'negatively racialised'. It reflects that this process is driven by dominant social groups and that these groups are themselves racialised (self-racialised), but as embodying 'positive' racialised characteristics, which usefully alerts that 'whiteness' is also a racial category and a product of this social process of racialisation

Inclusivity

Inclusivity is about valuing and respecting diversity, achieving a sense of belonging, and being person-centred, involving proactive and mainstream processes of universal design and recognition for and flexibility in addressing specific needs and in recognising specific strengths.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to the functional areas of University of Limerick, are:

1. Failure to provide reasonable accommodation for diversity and lack of Universal Design for Learning. This includes failure to address specific needs and preventing access to and participation in education, training and employment by staff and students across the identified groups, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- For disabled people: lack of flexible work arrangements; need for modified tasks, wage subsidy, transport/parking, human support, and assistive technology or physical adjustments; inaccessible buildings and public spaces; inaccessible communication channels; and limited understanding and application of the social model of disability and universal design.
- For deaf people: lack of statutory provision

for ISL interpreting for employment; and ISL interpreters insufficiently prepared to interpret in employment fields with many specialist concepts and terminology.

- For negatively racialised groups: lack of recognition for cultural difference and its practical implications, and, in particular for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers: the uncertainty or short-term nature of their visa or residential status; the lack of recognition of their existing qualifications; lack of information about how to access education; ineligibility to access bursaries and other schemes to assist with fees; language barriers, lack of translation and interpretation, and limited availability of English language classes.
- For Travellers: potential loss of income supports (such as the medical card) upon take-up of employment; a lack of networks and connectors (as exist for settled community) to assist them in getting into employment; removal of targeted education supports at primary and post-primary level (such as the visiting Teacher); limited financial and other resources (broadband, devices, study space etc.) to participate in education (the latter was exacerbated during COVID-related school/college closures).
- For people with caring responsibilities, including lone parents and some carers: inadequate family leave provision and lack of flexible working arrangements; potential loss of income supports; lack of affordable, accessible childcare and care services for older people; and impact of unequal sharing of caring responsibilities on women's ability

to take up full-time employment and on their promotion and other career opportunities.

- For people subjected to gender-based violence: lack of appropriate support provided to, leave arrangements made available for, and flexibility afforded to employees exposed to and dealing with issues of gender-based violence.
- For older people: lack of gradual retirement options and early retirement, and lack of opportunities to participate in teaching and research initiatives.
- For LGBTQIA+ people: lack of provision that acknowledges same-sex relationships and that enables people transitioning their gender in the workplace or education setting.
- For religious minorities: lack of provision and flexibility to enable religious observance and other religious imperatives.
- For people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless: unstable housing situation interrupting or delaying young people's engagement with education and/or employment.
- For former or current prisoners: lack of supports and Garda vetting procedures as a barrier to education and employment.

2. Invisibility for diversity, a culture of invisibility for diversity within an organisation, and a mono-cultural group dynamic, for staff and students across the identified groups, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- An absence of data on many of the identified groups in regard to their access to, participation in, and outcomes from employment, education and other key services.
- Fear of self-expression or disclosure of authentic self, in particular Travellers, LGBTQIA+ people, and people with 'hidden disabilities' feeling compelled to hide their identity in employment and education settings in order to avoid discrimination, harassment, and abuse.
- Learning and working environments that do not adequately or positively reflect the culture and identity of diverse groups, including negatively racialised groups

including Travellers, and LGBTQIA+ people.

- Attitudes and behaviours that present barriers, isolate and exclude staff and students, including disabled people, LGBTQIA+ people, older people, and negatively racialised people.

3. Failure to acknowledge and respond to intersectionality across the identified groups, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- Specific needs for those groups at the intersections between the grounds.
- Experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequality.
- Intersection of socio-economic disadvantage with identity-based inequality (in particular for: lone parents, Travellers and other minority ethnic groups, disabled people, older people, and transgender and non-binary people).

4. Limited understanding and/or capacity of employers and service providers with regard to equality and human rights issues, including understanding and responding to diversity.

5. Social isolation and social exclusion of staff and students across the identified groups, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- Particularly high degree of social exclusion experienced by negatively racialised people including Travellers, migrants, and disabled people.
- Rural isolation, in particular where people have limited access to transport.
- Social isolation of older people living alone; disabled people whose access to the community is limited, including those in congregated settings; lone parents; and people in Direct Provision.

Social Justice

Social Justice is about resources, opportunities and capabilities to flourish, involving action to enable achievement of outcomes.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to the functional areas of University of Limerick, are:

1. Poverty and material deprivation, including in a context of increased cost of living, across the identified groups, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- Comparatively higher levels of poverty experienced by: lone parents, Travellers, non-Irish nationals, disabled people, and transgender and gender non-binary people.
- The prohibitive financial cost of participating in HE, in particular, for: lone parents, Travellers, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, and disabled people.
- Lack of flexibility in the payment options for HE fees.
- A significant level of the total student population say that they are experiencing serious (or very serious) financial problems.
- Reliance on inadequate public transport to access education/employment for people living in poverty and those living in rural areas.
- Lack of access to affordable accommodation.
- Unequal impact of climate change and failure to address issues of environmental justice.
- Absence of gender-proofing and wider equality-proofing of national anti-poverty measures.

2. Unequal outcomes for those across the identified groups in regard to key resources (in particular income, education, and employment), with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- Low income, across the grounds, with particular regard to:
 - underemployment among migrants, due to issues of recognition of qualifications.
 - underemployment among deaf graduates compared to their hearing peers.
 - concentration of women in low-paid, part-time work, caring roles and voluntary unpaid roles.
 - precarious work, including insecurity of income and uncertain employment for people (predominantly women and minority ethnic migrants) on employment contracts with unspecified hours of work ('zero hour' contracts)
 - extra day-to-day spending costs associated with having a disability.
 - the gender pay gap and gender pension gap.
 - the ethnic pay gap in Irish HEIs.
 - dependence on social welfare supports, in particular for: some carers, lone parents, and Travellers.
- Poor education outcomes and/or low skills status, across the identified groups, with particular regard to:
 - lack of access to and outcomes from education, in particular for: young people from lower socio-economic groups and those from less affluent postcodes; Travellers; Roma; disabled people; some migrants; young women parenting alone; and current or former prisoners.
 - lower level of education outcomes

- associated with particular types of disability, in particular for: people with sensory disabilities; people with speech impediments; and people with an intellectual or learning disabilities,
- difficulty for disabled children, particularly those with a lower socio-economic status, in accessing mainstream education provision,
- lack of progression from training and education into employment for Travellers and disabled people.
- Barriers to employment, across the identified groups, with particular regard to:
 - high levels of unemployment for Travellers, Roma, disabled people, and African nationals.
 - lack of recognition for qualifications of migrant people.
 - lack of diversity in regard to employees across many sectors, including HE.
- Lack of in-work progression, across the identified groups, with particular regard to:
 - lack of women in management positions.
 - gender imbalance in HEIs with fewer women holding senior academic posts.
 - barriers to promotion for negatively racialised employees.
 - lack of life-long learning opportunities for older people.
 - lack of diversity at management and Board level.

3. Digital inequality, including lack of access to equipment, infrastructure and skills, an issue exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, across the identified groups.

4. 'Soft-barriers' of participation in employment and education for staff and students across the identified groups, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- Gendered concentration of men and women in certain education fields.
- Significant gender differences in the selection of science subjects at Leaving Certificate leading to under-representation

of women in STEM courses and in the STEM workforce, and under-representation of men in areas such as nursing & midwifery.

5. Unequal health status across the identified groups, which impacts negatively on people's ability to access and fully participate in employment and education, with the evidence gathered pointing specifically to:

- Impact of economic deprivation and disadvantage on the health, wellbeing, and life chances of children and adults.
- Mental health issues across the identified groups, and in particular for young people, Travellers, disabled people, and LGBTQIA+ people.
- Negative impact on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing of being homeless or at risk of homelessness or living in unsuitable accommodation.
- High levels of self-harm and suicide in the Traveller community and among young LGBTQIA+ people.
- Absence of opportunities for older people to live full and intellectually rewarding lives diminishes wellbeing and reduces quality of life.
- Limited availability of and access to mental health supports and services for young people.

Empowerment

Empowerment is about engaging with and enabling a diversity of voices at the level of the collective, involving this diversity being listened to and heard, with positive attention to their different viewpoints, and having influence and a meaningful engagement in decision-making processes.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to the functional areas of University of Limerick, are:

1. Lack of access to decision-making structures and systems and lack of influence on decision-making for staff and students across the identified groups, with particular regard to young people.
2. Lack of diversity of staff and students across the identified groups on governance structures of institutions.
3. Lack of adequate and appropriate feedback structures from those in leadership or management positions available to staff and students across the identified groups.
4. Lack of participation in research and research methodologies, across the identified groups, and over targeting of individuals from particular identified groups in specific research areas.
5. Lack of potential for staff and students across the identified groups for meaningful engagement with governance structures, decision-making, feedback systems and research, including tokenism.
6. Disempowerment of staff and students across the identified groups due to a lack of sufficient support and information to impact decision-making and a sense of being powerless and lacking influence and voice leading to discouragement.

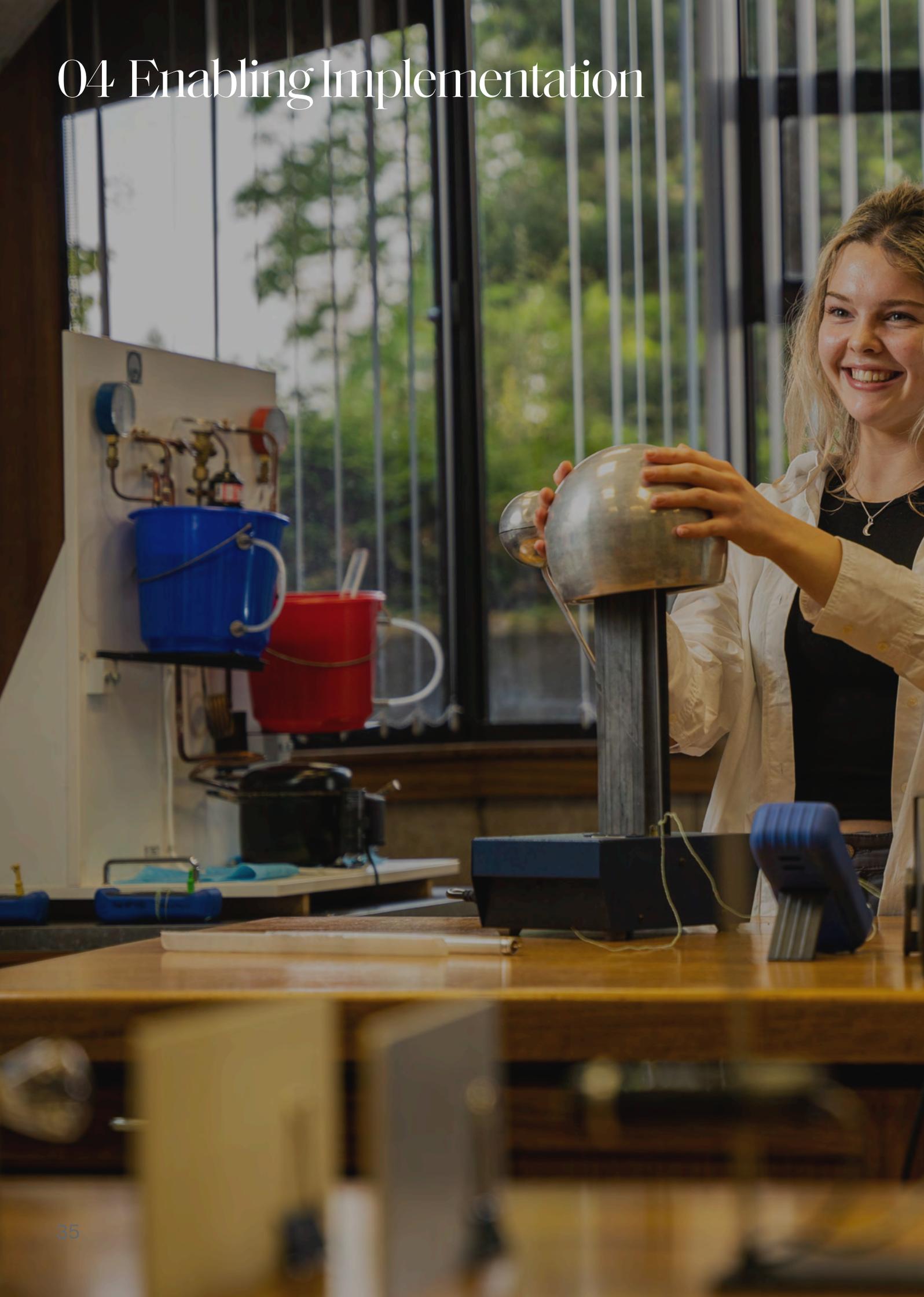
Agency

Agency is about autonomy, choice, and self-determination at the level of the individual, involving availability of and access to a range of options to enable this.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to the functional areas of University of Limerick, are:

1. Lack of real and accessible options to allow for a suitable range of choices for staff and students across the identified groups.
2. Lack of independence due to inadequate resources, legal status, lack of appropriate visa, or inadequate supports for staff and students across the identified groups.
3. Lack of access to appropriate and accessible information and support to enable informed choices to be made by staff and students across the identified groups.

04 Enabling Implementation





Leadership

Leadership for the implementation of the Duty will be the responsibility of the Governing Authority, the Executive Committee, the Management Council and the HREDI Steering Committee.

Familiarisation sessions on the Duty and this implementation plan will be facilitated for the Governing Authority, the Executive Committee, and the Management Council.

The Governing Authority will receive and consider the annual report on the progress made in implementing the Duty and addressing the equality and human rights issues.

The Executive Committee will include the Duty as a regular item on its agenda and take and consider reports on the progress being made to inform its discussions.

The Management Council will include the Duty as a regular item on its agenda and take and consider reports on the progress being made to inform its discussions.

The HREDI Steering Committee is responsible for this equality and human rights mainstreaming framework strategy and its annual action plans, monitoring their implementation and updating them as required. At its meetings, the HREDI Steering Committee considers ongoing reports on progress made under these plans. In doing so, it ensures a coherent approach to equality and human rights across all UL strategies, policies, plans and programmes. The HREDI Steering Committee keeps under review the implementation of the Duty and of the annual action plans by those responsible for the mainstreaming points and for the enabling actions. The HREDI Steering Committee highlights potential risks in this field for UL to be considered for inclusion in its risk register.

Implementation Group:

A sub group/working group for the Duty will continue to be convened to drive its implementation. The working group will:

- prepare an annual implementation plan for the Duty with key moments identified and enabling actions prioritised;
- track implementation of the Duty and the annual implementation plan by those responsible for the key moments and for enabling actions, providing or securing support as required;
- ensure progress made on implementing the Duty and addressing the equality and human rights issues is tracked adequately and holding records in this regard; and
- prepare an annual report on steps and progress made and, on the basis of this report, organise a reflection within UL on the progress & achievements made in implementing the Duty and addressing the equality and human rights issues. In addition, undertake reviews, as required, of specific elements of the implementation of the Duty.

Capacity

Training and Awareness:

- Staff induction will include a focus on the Duty and this implementation plan.
- The 'First seven weeks' programme with students will include a focus on the Duty and this implementation plan.
- Briefing videos and training sessions will be developed and provided to staff on a rolling basis.

Training and Skills:

- Training on the Duty and its requirements, with a particular focus on the Address step, will be provided to those responsible for the development and review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies, to ensure a common and high standard in the implementation of the Duty.

Monitoring progress

Steps will be taken to keep under review and strengthen equality data systems to better monitor progress made under the Duty.

Output and outcome indicators, with associated targets, will be developed to monitor progress on the steps taken to implement the Duty.

Performance indicators related to the equality and human rights issues' as assessed, will be developed and monitored by those responsible for the Address step of the Duty. The measurement of these will be reported annually to the HREDI Working Group for consideration in preparing the annual report on achievements in implementing the Duty.

Failure to implement the Duty will be included and tracked in the university risk register.

Linkages for coherence & collaboration

Effective links will be created and operationalised on an ongoing basis to associate UL's Athena Swan work and Race Equality Action Plan with the work of implementing the Duty.

This will include an engagement with the local committees in place across the departments for briefing and exchange to ensure coherence and collaboration.

The HREDI Strategy will be a standing item on the agenda of department meetings, alongside discussion of Athena Swan and the Race Equality Action Plan. This will encompass professional and support departments as well as academic departments.

Communication

We will integrate the Duty, our ambition for it, the implementation process, and the equality and human rights values statement:

- as an ongoing focus across all internal and external communications; and
- in our marketing and communication strategy.

In particular, this includes UL Connect and the UL website.

Theory of Change

INPUTS

IDENTIFIED GROUPS

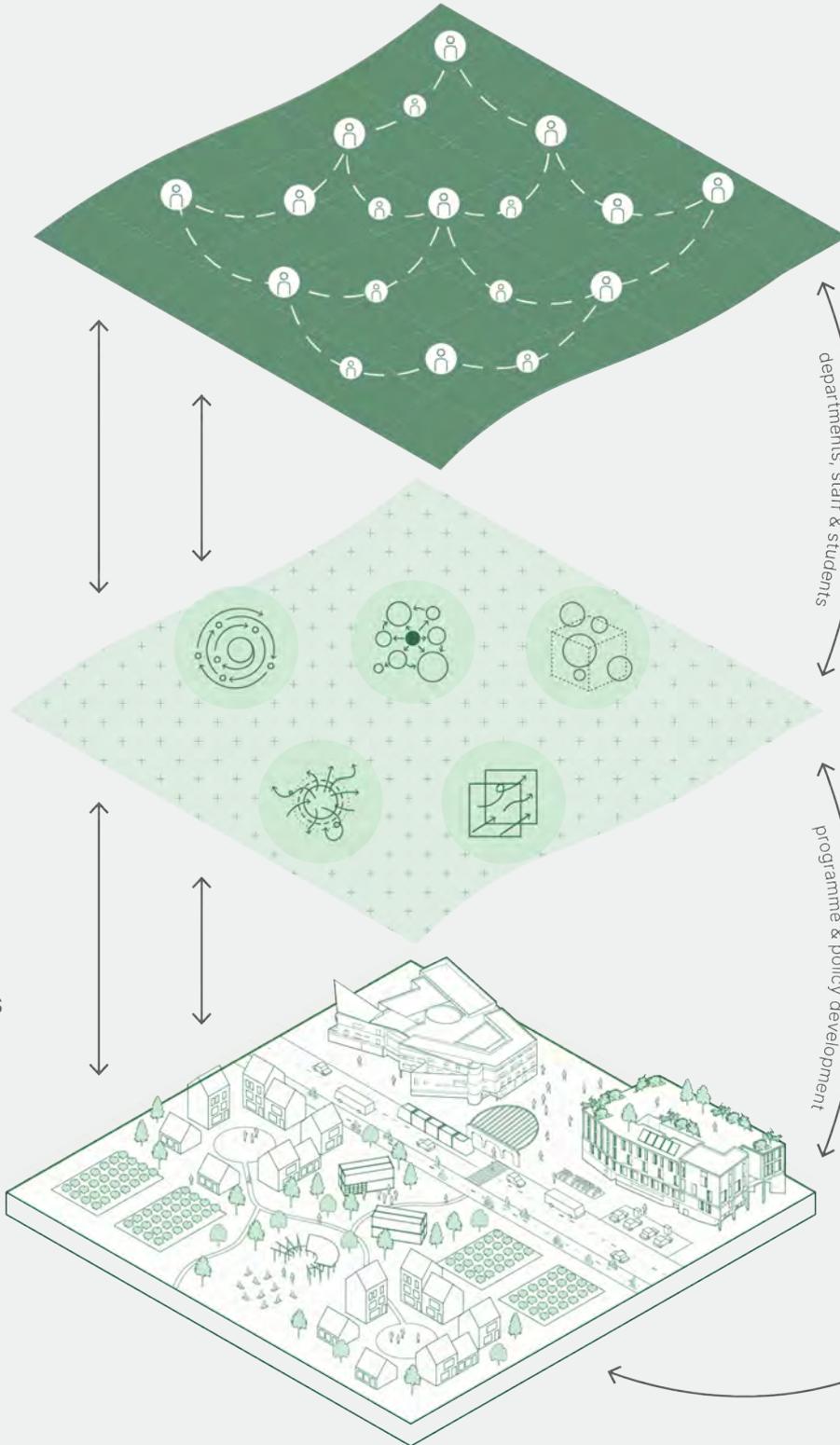
Gender
 Civil Status
 Family Status
 Age
 Disability
 Sexual Orientation
 Race
 Religion
 Traveller Community
 Socio-economic Status
 Rights Holders (these groups, as understood by UL, include neurodiverse people and deaf people. They further include people at the intersections of the different grounds)

VALUES

Empowerment
 Social Justice
 Inclusivity
 Agency
 Respect

FUNCTIONAL AREAS

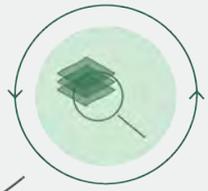
Teaching & Learning
 Employment
 Corporate Governance
 Buildings & Estates
 Promoting &
 Conducting Research & Innovation
 Community Outreach
 Student Experience
 Recreational & Visitor Services
 Internationalisation



participation and feedback from departments, staff & students

Resources for training, infrastructure programme & policy development

Assessment through values framework



Assess

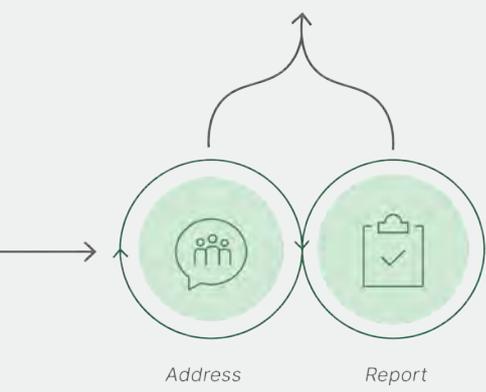
ACTIONS

- Implement
- Gender
- Equality
- Consent
- Athen
- Race

ASSUMPTIONS

- ...tion of Duty and UL's Action Plans
- ...er Action Plan
- ...ty & Human Rights Strategy Action Plan
- ...ent Framework Action Plan
- ...a Swan Action Plan
- ...Equality Action Plan (2023 - 2027)

- DATA & INFORMATION GATHERING
- ANALYSIS & EVALUATION
- PLANNING & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
- REPORTING & RECOMMENDATION
- COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT
- EDUCATION & TRAINING
- PROMOTING & ADVOCACY



OUTCOMES



ACHIEVEMENT

Effective response made to equality and human rights issues identified with positive outcomes for students, faculty and staff from across the identified groups, and full and effective implementation of the Action Plans



PLANS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

All university plans, policies and procedures reviewed or developed include an adequate and appropriate response to the equality and human rights issues identified as relevant



AWARENESS & SKILLS

Equality and human rights training provided, capacity and commitment to implement the Duty and the Action Plans strengthened



REPRESENTATION & FEEDBACK

Champions, Focus Groups, Membership, Increased Representation from across the identified groups, Increase in reporting and feedback



RESPECT & WELFARE

Safety, Belonging, Empowerment and Self-determination for students, faculty and staff across the identified groups

IMPACT



EGALITARIAN UNIVERSITY

By 2030 University of Limerick will emerge as a national leader in achieving equality and fulfilling human rights, becoming a fully accessible, inclusive, and diverse institution

INDICATORS

- Increased diversity and inclusivity metric in presence and outcomes for students, faculty, staff in all functional areas
- Five values – social justice, empowerment, inclusivity, agency & respect – embedded throughout institutional practices and communications
- Address step of the Duty consistently and effectively implemented
- Consistent, robust reporting on progress and achievements
- Action plans effectively implemented and evaluated
- Constant feedback loops

05 Implementation





Address Step

The Address step of the HREDI Strategy incorporating the Duty is an ongoing obligation of the organisation and is implemented as an integral part of the development and review of plans, policies, strategies, programmes and projects. It involves **targeted** actions specifically designed to directly address a number of specific priority equality and human rights issues identified. These actions are set out in our ground-specific targeted action plans.

The Address step involves mainstreaming actions to ensure that all plans, policies, strategies, programmes and projects being developed or reviewed address the relevant equality and human rights issues adequately and appropriately. This involves including the following four steps as part of the development or review process:

1. At the commencement of the development/review process:

- Review the assessment of equality and human rights issues to establish those equality and human rights issues that are relevant to the particular plan, policy, strategy, programme or project.
- Gather the data and information available in relation to the equality and human rights issues identified as relevant.
- Review the equality and human rights values statement to extract the statements of outcome or statements of process that are relevant.
- Include this material in any brief for the development/review process.

2. In implementing the development/review process:

- Include an examination of the relevant equality and human rights issues in any evaluation or contextual review conducted for the plan, policy, strategy, programme or project.
- Transmit the obligations under the Duty to

any external consultants contracted and ensure they are fully briefed in this regard.

- Track the relevant equality and human rights issues to ensure they are addressed and the values benchmarks to ensure they are respected during the development/review process.

3. At the final draft stage of the development/review process:

- Convene a meeting of relevant staff to check:
 - Does the draft adequately and appropriately take up and address each of the equality and human rights issues identified as relevant?
 - Does the draft adequately and appropriately reflect the statement of priority/statement of process for each of the values?
 - Does the draft include any provision that might run counter to our equality and human rights values or to an effective response to the equality and human rights issues identified as relevant?
- Conduct a participative exercise, for initiatives of scale, with the working group for the Duty and, possibly, with associations/networks representative of the identified groups to check that the equality and human rights issues are adequately and appropriately identified and addressed.

4. After the development/review process:

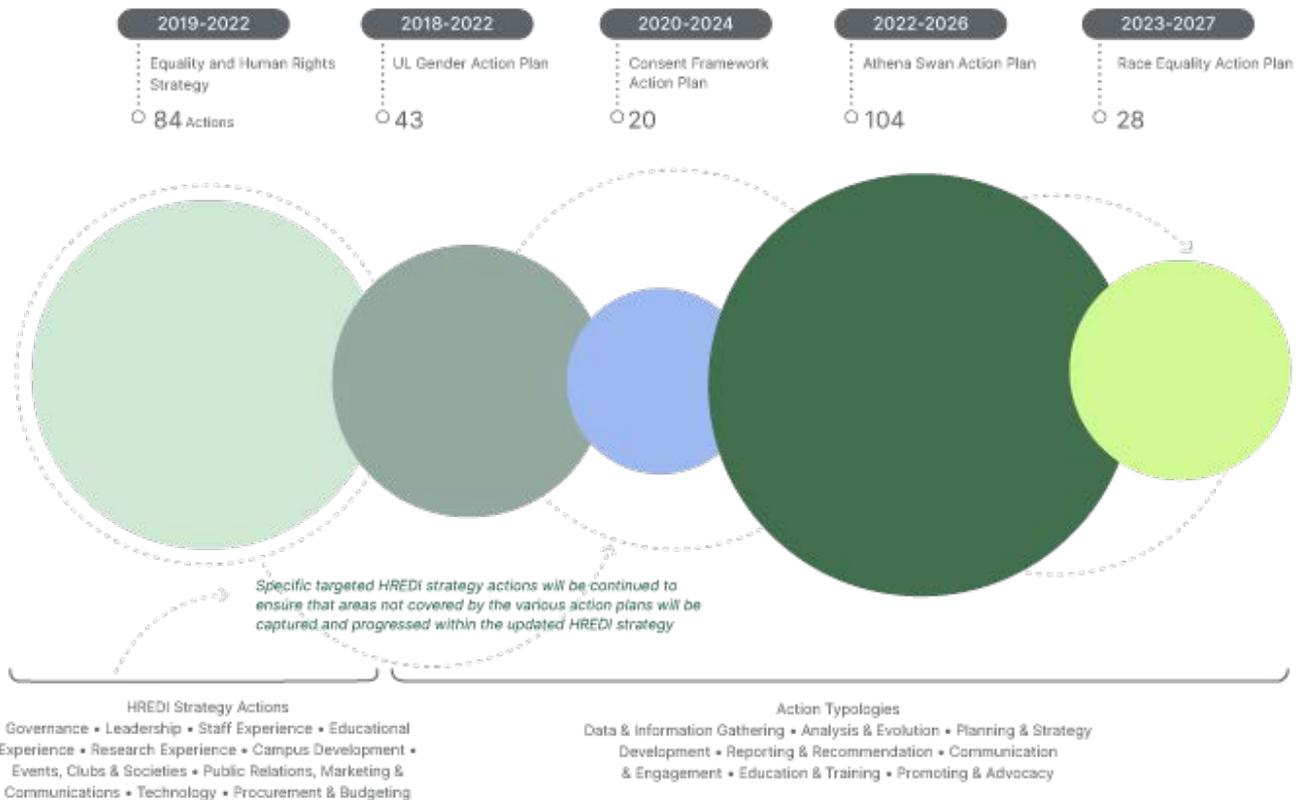
- Establish and/or use existing monitoring systems to track progress on the equality and human rights issues identified as relevant.
- Report annually on progress made in addressing the equality and human rights issues and advancing the statement of priority/statement of process for each of the equality and human rights values.
- Use this report to reflect on this progress and to strengthen the plan, policy, strategy, programme or project, as found to be necessary.

Targeted Actions

Effective governance in higher education is essential for campus development, leadership, and improving staff and student experiences. This, in turn, enhances customer satisfaction and strengthens public relations.

Targeted action to implement the existing strategies (including Athena Swan Action Plans, Gender Action Plan, Consent Framework Action Plan, Race Equality Action Plan and our Access and Widening Participation Policy 2023.

Any future targeted action plans that may be needed will be aligned with the value statements and will address issues identified through the implementation of this strategy.



Portfolio of Actions

YEAR OF INITIATING ACTION

2018

15 Specific actions

2019

12

2020

13

9

2021

8

8

2022

3

3

2023

71

12

2024

25

15

2025

8

1

ACTION TYPOLOGIES

DATA & INFORMATION GATHERING

- Data Collection
- Survey
- Case Study

ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

- Analyse
- Review
- Assess
- Monitor
- Identify

PLANNING & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- Plan
- Strategy
- Framework
- Implementation

REPORTING & RECOMMENDATION

- Report
- Recommendation
- Policy

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

- Awareness
- Information
- Engage
- Forum
- Focus Group

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Training
- Workshop

PROMOTING & ADVOCACY

- Campaign
- Event
- Support
- Opportunity

ACTION PLANS

- UL Gender Action Plan
- Consent Framework Action Plan
- Athena Swan Action Plan
- Race Equality Implementation Plan

VALUES OBSERVED BY LINE WEIGHT



Mainstreaming Equality & Human Rights

The Strategic Plan of University of Limerick will include a link to the assessment of equality and human rights issues and to the implementation plan for the HREDI Strategy/Duty, alongside specific commitments to equality and human rights that respond to the issues.

Key moments that would be a focus for implementing the Address step of the Duty will be the development or review of:

- Governance standards and documents.
- University strategies such as the Research Strategy (Wisdom for Action 2022–2027), Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (Action for Wisdom 2022–2027), quality strategy, internationalisation strategy and sustainability strategy.
- Faculty strategies and annual action plans.
- Operational strategies, such as campus development plan, PCC strategy, communication strategy.
- All future policies and procedures.
- Annual review of health and safety statement.
- Quality reviews, and inclusion of guidance

and direction on implementing the Duty in University of Limerick document for the quality review process.

- Internal policies and procedures through the policy hub:
 - A set of policies will be identified each year for review for compliance with the Duty,
 - The policy framework document will be reviewed to guide and direct implementation of the Duty in relation to all future policies and procedures.
- Accreditation process.

The Address step of the Duty will also be implemented through:

- Procurement procedures, where we pass on, in a relevant format, the Duty to contractors.
- Budgeting and financial statements.
- Performance and Development Review System (PDRS), where we include a focus on implementing the Duty and living out our equality and human rights values.

An annual implementation plan will identify the key moments and key procedures to be addressed each year.

Reporting

A report on the implementation of the HREDI strategy and progress achieved on foot of this will be included in our annual report, which will be presented to the HREDI Steering Committee, the Executive Committee and the Governing Authority.

As part of the preparation of this review the working group will convene and facilitate a session or a process for relevant staff to reflect on the

progress made and any steps that might need to be taken to strengthen the implementation plan. In the lead up to the development of our future strategic plans, we will review and update the assessment of equality and human rights issues and this implementation plan.

06 Appendices





Action Plans, Strategies and Policies

Item	Link
Athena Swan Institution Action Plan	Click Here
University of Limerick Gender Action Plan	Click Here
Consent Framework Action Plan	Click Here
Race Equality Action Plan	Click Here
Access & Widening Participation Policy	Click Here
Research Strategy 2022-2027 Wisdom for Action	Click Here
Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022-2027 Action for Wisdom	Click Here



HREDI Committee

Membership & Working Group Membership

Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Members

Name	Title	Area Represented
Dr Ross Anderson	Associate Vice President	Academic Affairs
Prof Sean Arkins	Dean	Faculty of Science & Engineering
Gary Butler	Chief Financial & Performance Officer	Finance & Performance
Dr Marie Connolly	Director	Office of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Roger Dsilva	President	UL Postgraduate Student Union
Karen Fanneran	Employee Relations Manager	Human Resources
Dr Mary Fitzpatrick	Head	Centre for Transformative Learning
Andrew Flaherty	Chief Commercial Officer	Chief Commercial Officer
Prof Nigel Healey	Professor	Vice President Global & Community Engagement
Alex Hodgers	Co-Chair EqUL: Staff LGBTQIA+ Network	EqUL
Dr Sandra Joyce	Dean	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Caolinn Kennedy	Disability Officer	Student Disability Services
Dr Norelee Kennedy	Vice President	Research
Prof Shane Kilcommins	Committee Chair	Office of Provost & Deputy President
Prof Ann Ledwith	Director	HCI (Human Capital Initiative) UL@Work

Name	Title	Area Represented
Deirdre McGrath	Dean	Faculty of Education & Health Sciences
Dr Anca Minescu	Assistant Dean International	Sanctuary Committee
Dr Mairead Moriarty	Vice President Global & Community Engagement (Acting)	Global & Community Engagement
Dr Finbarr Murphy	Dean	Kemmy Business School
Dr Aoife Neary	Assistant Dean	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Faculty of Education & Health Sciences
Michael O'Brien	Projects Officer	Office of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Bobby O'Connor	Director	HR
Liam O'Reilly	Director	ITD
Robert Reidy	Director	Buildings & Estates
Laura Ryan	Director	Marketing, Communications & Public Affairs
Dr Patrick Ryan	Associate Vice President Director	Student Engagement
Dr. Patrice Twomey	Director	Cooperative Education & Careers Division

HREDI Strategy Working Group

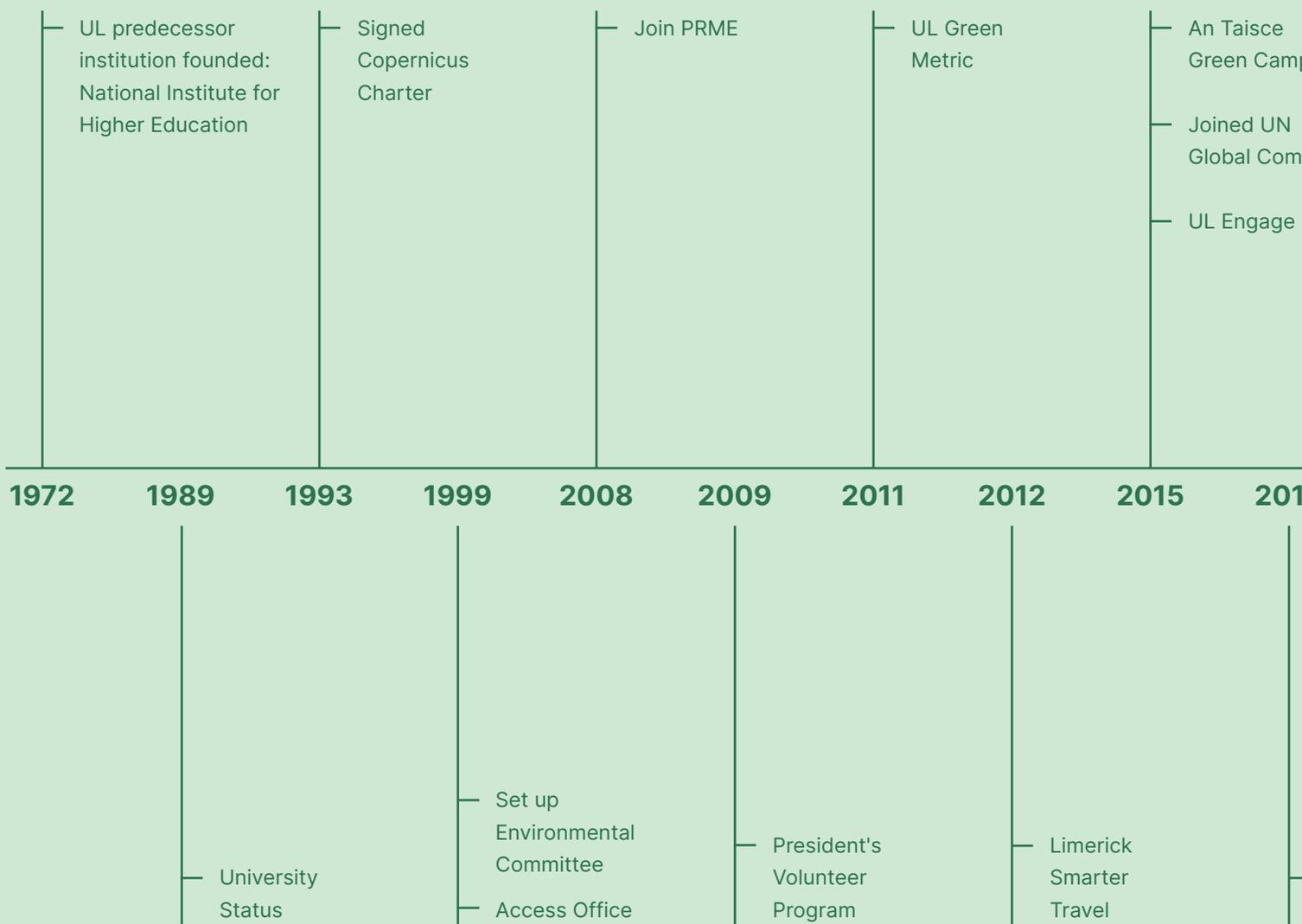
Name	Title	Area Represented
Dr Lydia Bracken	Assistant Dean	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Dr Marie Connolly	Director and Chair HREDI Strategy Working Group	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Laura Corcoran/Katie Martin	Student Communities Officers (22/23 - 23/24)	Student Life / Students' Union
Paul Dillon	Director, Technology Transfer Office	Research Office Nominee
Cliona Donnellan	Buildings & Estates	Member of Staff DisAbility Forum

HREDI Strategy Working Group (continued)

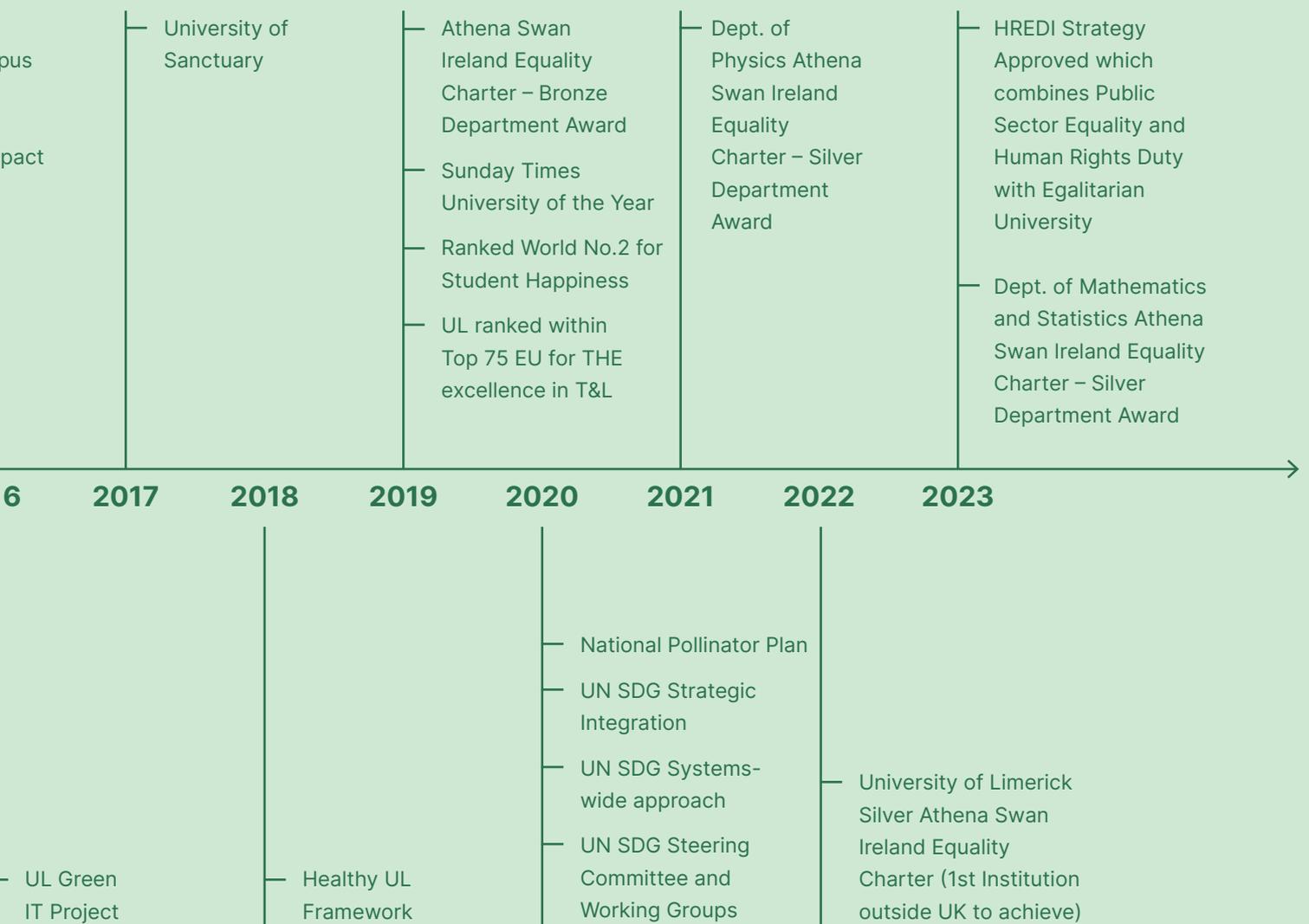
Name	Title	Area Represented
Mary Dundon	Librarian	Library Nominee
Karen Fanneran	Employee Relations Manager	HR Nominee-Member Consent Framework Policy Review Group
Dr Joachim Fischer	Associate Professor	Age Friendly University Working Group
Edel Gissane	IT QMS Manager & Quality Officer	ITD Nominee
Dr Sindy Joyce	Assistant Professor	Lecturer in Traveller Studies
Maureen Keogh	Senior Administrator	Office of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Dr Caroline Lane	Disability Support Services Manager	DisAbility Committee
Rhona McCormack	Interim Director	Student Affairs
Dr Caroline Murphy	Associate Professor	Co-Chair, Kemmy Business School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Dr Yoga Nathan	Associate Professor A in Medical Education, School of Medicine	Chair, Ethnic Diversity Forum
Dr Aoife Neary	Assistant Dean	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Faculty of Education & Health Sciences
Dr David Newport	Assistant Dean	Area Represented to EDI & Internationalisation, Faculty of Science & Engineering
Michael O'Brien	Projects Officer	Office of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Ber O'Connell	Finance Systems Manager	Finance Nominee
Dr Michelle O'Donoghue	Assistant Professor, School of Allied Health	Co-Chair, UL Autism Special Interest Group (SIG)
Thomas O'Shaughnessy	Educational Assistive Technology Manager	Chair, Web Accessibility Subgroup
Niamh O'Sullivan Walsh	Equality Officer	UNITE
Carol Jane Shanley	Accommodation Administrator	PCC Nominee
Dr Cristiano Storni	Associate Professor	Co-Chair, UL Autism Special Interest Group (SIG)



UL Sustainability Journey to Date



The following is a historic timeline of the key sustainability milestones UL has reached to date. We have always aspired to creating positive social and environmental impact; each milestone conveys how our commitment to sustainable development has grown over time.



UN Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2015) provide “a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”. At their heart, the 17 SDGs are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership. They acknowledge that eliminating poverty and human deprivations must go hand-in-hand with improving access to quality health and education, reducing social and financial inequality, and raising economic prosperity – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve the health of the natural world.

One way of understanding the SDGs is to see them as an acknowledgment of the gravity of our collective situation – by mere virtue of the number of goals that need to be met. Another perspective is to use them as a mechanism to reflect on how we arrived at our current situation across each identified dimension of planetary life. Irrespective of the many ways in which they can be interpreted, the one aspect that cannot be ignored is the interconnected, interdisciplinary, cross-boundary and cross-cultural nature of what must be made operational to address them.

The implications on the role of learning and education across society are central to any

meaningful conversation relating to societal and environmental change; specifically, the implications on the institutions and individuals who serve these social and natural functions. For higher education institutions (HEIs), as producers of both knowledge and talent, there is a transversal infrastructural responsibility that must be met.

To meet this great need, HEIs will need to play three interdependent roles:

- Foster change agents that can act to realise transformation towards the complex sustainability challenges of the 21st century.
- Develop sustainability-based research and knowledge to guide the transition of our societal institutions and structures.
- Transform higher education institutions into pioneering exemplar models of sustainable development.

The complexity of transitioning to a sustainable world means no single institution or sector can complete this journey in isolation. Our societal challenges are fundamentally a collective action problem – their resolution will be characterised by the recognition and realisation of our deep interdependence, with place and within our communities.

“Global problems are systemic problems. They are all interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, the Sustainable Development Goals also need to be seen as a systemic set which is interconnected and interdependent. You can’t deal with them in isolation.”
– Fritjof Capra



Becoming a Sustainable University

“The challenge of creating a more sustainable future for Ireland is a collective responsibility on all of us” (Project Ireland 2040, 2019). It is our responsibility as a HEI to contribute to the transition toward a sustainable society and become a ‘Sustainable University’.

To become a Sustainable University, we must start by acknowledging that true sustainability will require permanent adaptive responsiveness to ongoing change. The prerequisite of adaptability and responsiveness is embodiment. It ensures ideas and intentions are rooted in action. Consequently, embodiment can be seen as the central characteristic of a Sustainable University; a title for institutions that go beyond traditional curricula and research programmes, and actively explore change within their own ethos, practices and operations.

A sustainable world is not a foregone conclusion – our actions today will determine the future we manifest. The gravity of this responsibility necessitates that we do not drift along with the tides of change. Instead, we are called to

intentionally open our mind, heart, and hands to the possibilities that can only be revealed by moving bravely into the unknown. If we become trapped by dogma and incremental innovation, we will find ourselves sustaining a world characterised by the faults of the present. The success of our collective transition will largely depend on the degree to which HEIs claim a role in advancing the critical gaps in our knowledge and nurturing the vital shifts in our culture. To fully leverage the potential for change that HEIs hold, this role must play out across all aspects of our institutions: from boardrooms and lecture halls to campus grounds

As a result, UL recognises that success is to be found in the union between the thoughtful reimagination of both the tangible aspects (e.g. educational spaces) and intangible aspects (e.g. governance models) of our institution. To do so requires a whole university approach, underpinned by a model that takes the main areas of the modern university into account. These areas provide platforms for experimentation – and ultimately transformation – in service of the journey toward becoming a Sustainable University.

Deep sustainability is radically a learning process that means 'permanent adaptive responsiveness to a permanently changing, ever-emergent set of circumstances.'
 - John Foster



Sustainability Framework 2030

To deliver on its sustainability commitments, UL established a cohesive governance structure to guarantee clear and consistent leadership, responsibility, open accountability and agility, which will enable us to learn as we go and adapt to a complex, ambiguous and fluid reality.

COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The President at UL provides leadership, commitment and support for the UL Sustainability Framework 2030 (UL's system-wide approach to becoming a sustainable university). The framework is UL's targeted response to the UN SDGs.

The Chief Finance and Performance Officer (CFPO) and UL's Executive Committee (EC) have overall responsibility for sustainability at UL. The governance structure for the implementation of the sustainability agenda centres around the UL Sustainability Framework 2030.

UL'S SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK 2030

The framework takes a mission-based approach. A mission-based approach requires the identification of clear metrics against which we can measure our progress. UL's Sustainability Framework 2030 was co-designed and developed by the UL community with active senior support and leadership.

The framework sets out a UL system-wide approach to sustainability and articulates our commitment to successfully implementing 21 missions, all of which are aimed at realising our ambition of becoming a sustainable university.

UL Mission-based Sustainability Framework 2030



Download
Framework



Mission Lab

The Mission Lab is responsible for leading the orchestration and progression of the mission portfolio.

At its core, a mission-based approach affords UL the time and space to build a bespoke innovation engine; one that will enable increased organisational agility and responsiveness as it matures. It will require the development of a strong governance model that ensures collective accountability and responsibility, all while enabling experimentation and informed risk-taking.

Engaging students in the work of the Mission Lab is crucial for the progression of the mission portfolio and the university's transition to sustainability. As members of the campus community and future leaders, students bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and enthusiasm to problem-solving. By involving students as co-designers of solutions, we not only foster a sense of ownership and commitment to the sustainability missions but also tap into

their unique experiences, knowledge, and talents. This collaborative approach enables the development of innovative, effective, and contextually relevant solutions that address the challenges faced by the university. Furthermore, engaging students in the Mission Lab's efforts helps cultivate a culture of sustainability and environmental stewardship within the campus community, empowering students to become agents of change in their own lives and beyond.

As a new entity, the Mission Lab will be operated by a dedicated team with the mandate to fulfil the following roles:

- Orchestrate and manage the mission portfolio
- Act as cross-pollinators between mission teams
- Provide resources and support to mission teams
- Develop novel mission-based methods and tools
- Capture and disseminate ongoing learning
- Leverage funding for effective investment
- Build new connections and increase momentum

The image shows a modern building facade with a dark, vertically-slatted metal screen. The top of the building is covered in lush greenery, including trees and various plants. A solar panel is visible on the roof. The 'Mission Lab' logo is prominently displayed on the facade. The logo consists of a stylized green icon of three vertical bars of varying heights, followed by the text 'Mission Lab' in a clean, sans-serif font. Below the facade, a group of people is gathered on a paved area, looking at an informational display board. To the left, there is an open-plan office space with people working at tables. The foreground is a grassy area with small white flowers.

Mission Lab

Mission Lab
The
Mission
Change.

Mission Lab
The
Mission
Change.

Mission Lab
The
Mission
Change.

UL Sustainability Missions



Mission Lab

By 2030, UL's Mission Lab will have orchestrated and led its extended community to achieve the UL Mission Portfolio.



Earth Guild

By 2030, UL will have co-developed a trade school that supports the growth of sustainability-based vocations within local communities.



Transition Governance Framework

By 2030, UL will have piloted a sustainability-led governance model and have shaped HE policy within Ireland.



Open Loop University

By 2030, UL will provide access to the Mission Lab process and learning content to its alumni and offer them opportunities to engage with the mission portfolio.



Citizens Mission Council

By 2030, UL's Mission Lab will have fostered active citizenship through robust civic engagement and participatory innovation processes.



Active Mobility Campus

By 2030, UL will provide only sustainable forms of transport within and between campuses, with a focus on physical mobility where possible.



Digital Campus Commons

By 2030, UL will have transparently reported on and shared its sustainability journey through a university digital twin.



Student Livelearns

By 2030, UL will have built student accommodation that integrates the practices, behaviours and infrastructure of sustainable development into the everyday lives of students.



Fab Campus

By 2030, UL will act as a test bed for the development and scaling of circular production & consumption systems.



Agrihood Campus

By 2030, the majority of food consumed on the UL campus will be healthy and sourced from within the bioregion and/or from the university grounds.



Mission Impact Hub

By 2030, UL's start-up incubator will incorporate principles of sustainability into its start-up programmes and work to commercialise opportunities identified by the Mission Lab.



Biophillic Campus

By 2030, UL will have integrated nature and natural materials within all campus buildings and environments.



Campus
Tribe

By 2030, UL will have fostered a place-based identity anchored in a program of nature-based rituals that embody a culture of connectedness.



Biodiverse
Campus

By 2030, UL will have increased the biodiversity and volume of plant and animal life on campus and will maintain ecologically healthy levels.



Mission
Driven
Learning

By 2030, UL will have pioneered mission-driven curriculum to support the transition.



Revitalised
River
Shannon

By 2030, UL will have significantly contributed to the ecological health of the River Shannon and its associated natural ecosystems.



Egalitarian
University

By 2030, UL will be the national leader in terms of embedding equality and inclusion in structures, opportunities and community.



Clean
Water
Campus

By 2030, UL will will have optimised campus water accessibility and water management & protection.



Self
Powered
Campus

By 2030, UL will act as a test bed for the development and scaling of sustainable energy systems.



Circular
Campus

By 2030, UL will act as a test bed for the development of circular material flows and material usage.



Carbon
Neutral
Campus

By 2030, UL will have achieved carbon-neutral status.

Speculative Campus Vision



STUDENT LIVE-LEARNS

REVITALISED RIVER SHANNON

CAMPUS TRIBE

BIODIVERSE CAMPUS

EARTH GUILD

SELF-POWERED CAMPUS

MISSION IMPACT HUB

DIGITAL CAMPUS COMMONS

TRANSITION G

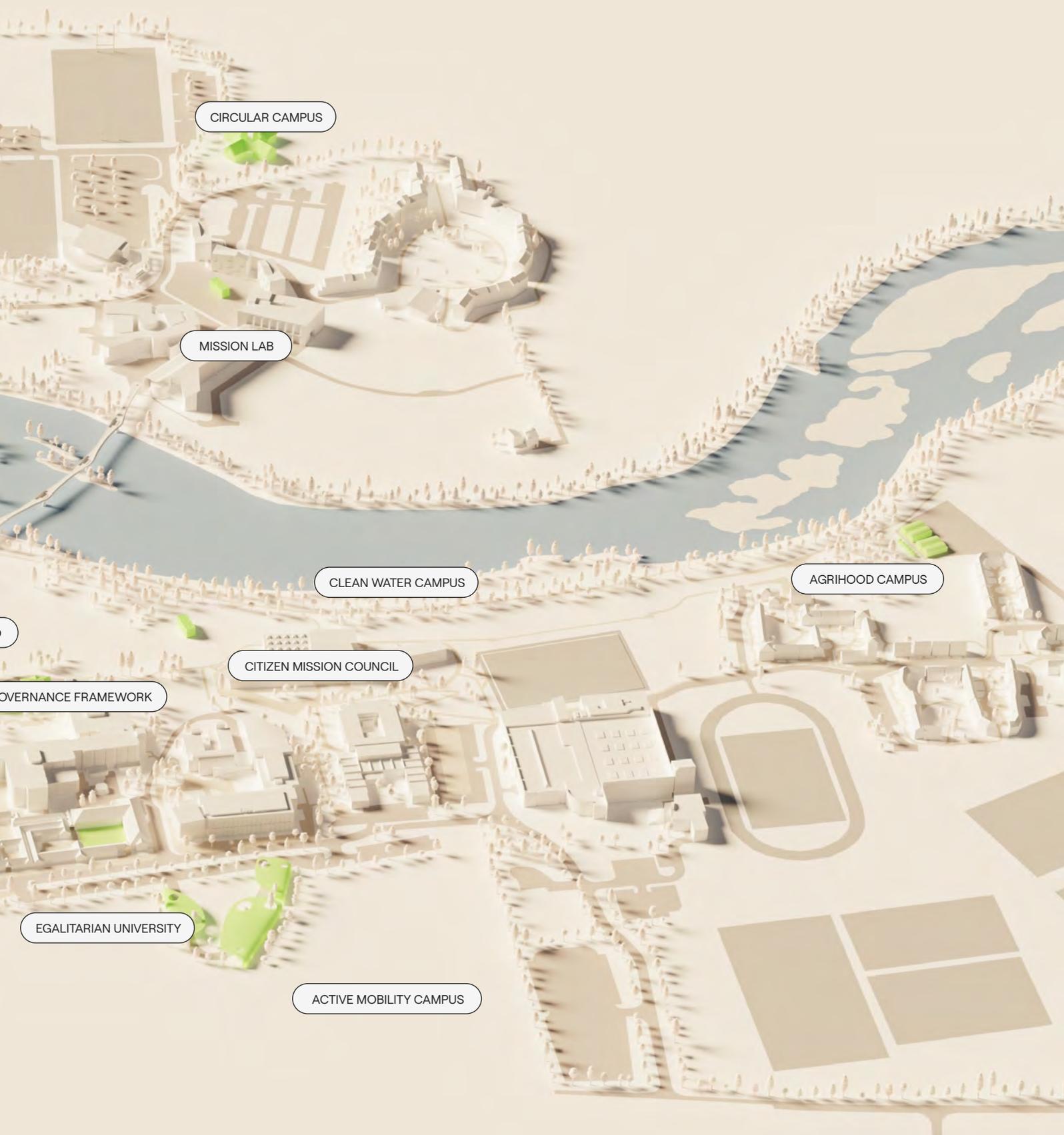
MISSION DRIVEN LEARNING

OPEN LOOP UNIVERSITY

FAB CAMPUS

BIOPHILIC CAMPUS

CARBON NEUTRAL CAMPUS



CIRCULAR CAMPUS

MISSION LAB

CLEAN WATER CAMPUS

AGRIHOOD CAMPUS

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

CITIZEN MISSION COUNCIL

EGALITARIAN UNIVERSITY

ACTIVE MOBILITY CAMPUS

