**EHS Equality and Diversity Committee – Terms of Reference [amended Oct. 2020]**

**Aim of Committee:** To actively promote and implement within EHS a culture that eliminates discrimination, celebrates diversity, promotes equality of opportunity, protects human rights and nurtures respect for one and all and in which people are valued and motivated to excel and achieve their full potential in a collegial and supportive environment.

**Background:** To effectively achieve the stated aim of the committee a strategic approach to the EHS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work will be developed and implemented. This will be informed by practice informed dialogue within Departments and Schools. Strategic priorities and objectives will reflect the needs and concerns of EHS staff, students and academic/administrative structures, demonstrate best practice, respond to relevant existing legislation and align with the principles and objectives as outlined in the current UL Equality and Human Rights Strategy 2019-2021 and in the University Dignity and Respect Policy. Irish legislation defines discrimination as treating one person in a less favourable way than another person based on any of the following nine grounds: (Equal Status Acts (2000-2015); Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015)).

* Gender: range of gender identities - man, woman or transgender,
* Civil status: range of status includes - single, married, separated, divorced, widowed people, [civil partners and former civil partners](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/birth_family_relationships/civil_partnerships/civil_partnership_and_same_sex_couples.html),
* Family status: this refers to the parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability,
* Sexual orientation: range of orientations including but not limited to gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual
* Religion: means religious belief, background, outlook or none
* Age
* Disability: includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions
* Race: includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin
* Membership of the Traveller community.

(http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/equality\_in\_work/equality\_in\_the\_workplace.html)

In the context of the above grounds the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 outlaw discrimination in a wide range of employment and employment-related areas. These include recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment and will be considered when developing the EHD EDI strategy. Additional grounds that will be considered when developing the EHS EDI strategy are **socio-economic status and neurodiversity** (referenced in UL Equality and Human Rights Strategy 2019-21).

**Socio-economic status** refers to the economic, cultural, social and symbolic resources available to individuals. **Neurodiversity** is the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioural traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population. Neurodiversity is a concept where neurological differences are to be recognized and respected as any other human variation. These differences can include those labelled with Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Spectrum, Tourette Syndrome, and others.

**Objectives of the EHS Equality and Diversity Committee:**

* To develop and implement an EHS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (EDI) which will be systematically promoted, actioned, resourced and evaluated. This Action Plan will be informed by the Equality and Human Rights Strategy of the University, the EHS Athena SWAN process and learning from EHS Department and Schools Equality and Diversity Committees.
* The Action Plan will be a proactive and dynamic document driven by Key Performance Indicators based on (i) the mapping and alignment work done within the EHS Equality and Diversity committee (ii) the learning gleaned from networking and information sharing within and between the Faculty, the Institution and other relevant avenues, and (iii) findings from any action research undertaken by the EHS ED Committee.
* To emphasise and respond to the grounds of EDI as intersectional when developing the principles, strategic priorities and objectives of the EHS Action Plan.
* To respond to and enshrine as appropriate, within the Action Plan, the principles (mission & vision) and objectives as outlined in the University of Limerick Equality and Human Rights Strategy 2019-2021.
* To define, resource and implement the necessary data gathering procedures and structures at University, Faculty and Department levels to facilitate relevant international accreditation, strategy formulation and evaluation (Alignment with University “Risk Register” will be involved).
* To work in partnership with internal and external agencies and offices, provide training and development opportunities to EHS staff and students.
* To work in partnership with the HR Equality and Diversity office to support the Athena Swan (AS) accreditation and reaccreditation process through the active engagement of EHS Departments and required response to the UL AS institutional action plan.

**Committee membership:** Committee shall comprise of the following:

* Co-Chairpersons (nominated by the Dean of Faculty)
* Dean of Faculty or nominee
* Faculty Manager EHS
* University Athena Swan Coordinator
* Recording Secretary
* 2 representatives from each Department/School (nominated by HOD)\*
* 1 Administrative Staff representative
* 1 Technical Staff representative
* 1 Research Staff representative
* 1 Postgraduate representative
* 1 UG Student representative

*\*1 Department/School member should be Chair of/or represent Athena Swan/E&D activities,* ***1 representative should aim to attend each meeting.***

Co-opted members - The Committee will have the power to co-opt up to 3 additional members, in order to ensure balance as far as possible in terms of equality and expertise, and the strategic goals of the committee.

Membership will be for a term of three years. Renewal of membership will be staggered to ensure continuity of committee membership.

Postgraduate & UG Student members will be invited by Chairs.

**Operation of Committee:**

* The agenda of the committee will normally consist of the following items:
	1. Acceptance of the minutes
	2. Matters arising from the minutes
	3. Announcements
	4. Reports
	5. Specific agenda items
	6. AOB
		+ Special meetings can be arranged in order to consider a single item, in which case this will be the only matter discussed.
		+ Any member of the committee can notify the chairpersons or secretary of items that they would like to include on the agenda. One week’s notice should be provided. Alternatively, they can propose such items at the next meeting of the committee. Items of any other business should be identified early on in any meeting.
		+ The committee will endeavour to consider all the items that are listed on each agenda. The chairpersons will endeavour to implement this policy and to ensure that all members of the committee are given the opportunity to participate in the work of the committee on an equal basis and to make equal contributions to meetings.
		+ Proposals presented to the committee will normally be supported by appropriate documentation.
		+ Documentation will be circulated to members of the committee with the agenda for the meeting at which the item is to be considered (preferably electronically).
		+ The agenda, plus any supporting documentation, will be circulated to members of the committee normally three working days prior to each meeting.
		+ The committee will normally seek to reach a consensus on matters that it discusses. However, a vote may be taken on any motion proposed and seconded.
		+ Meetings of the committee will last a maximum of 90 minutes unless a majority of members present vote to extend this period.
		+ Work on specific items may be delegated by the chairpersons to other members of the committee. Such individuals will then work on specific items in a way that is directed by the committee. The establishment of sub committees will be used for core on-going business and from time to time to progress specific items.
		+ As appropriate (e.g. potentially identifiable individuals from survey results) members of the committee will at all times respect the principles of anonymity/confidentiality.

**Frequency of Meetings:** A minimum of twice per semester or as necessary.

**Reporting:** The EHS Equality & Diversity Committee will report to the Faculty Management Committee. Minutes will be lodged on Sharepoint and these will be available to all EHS staff.