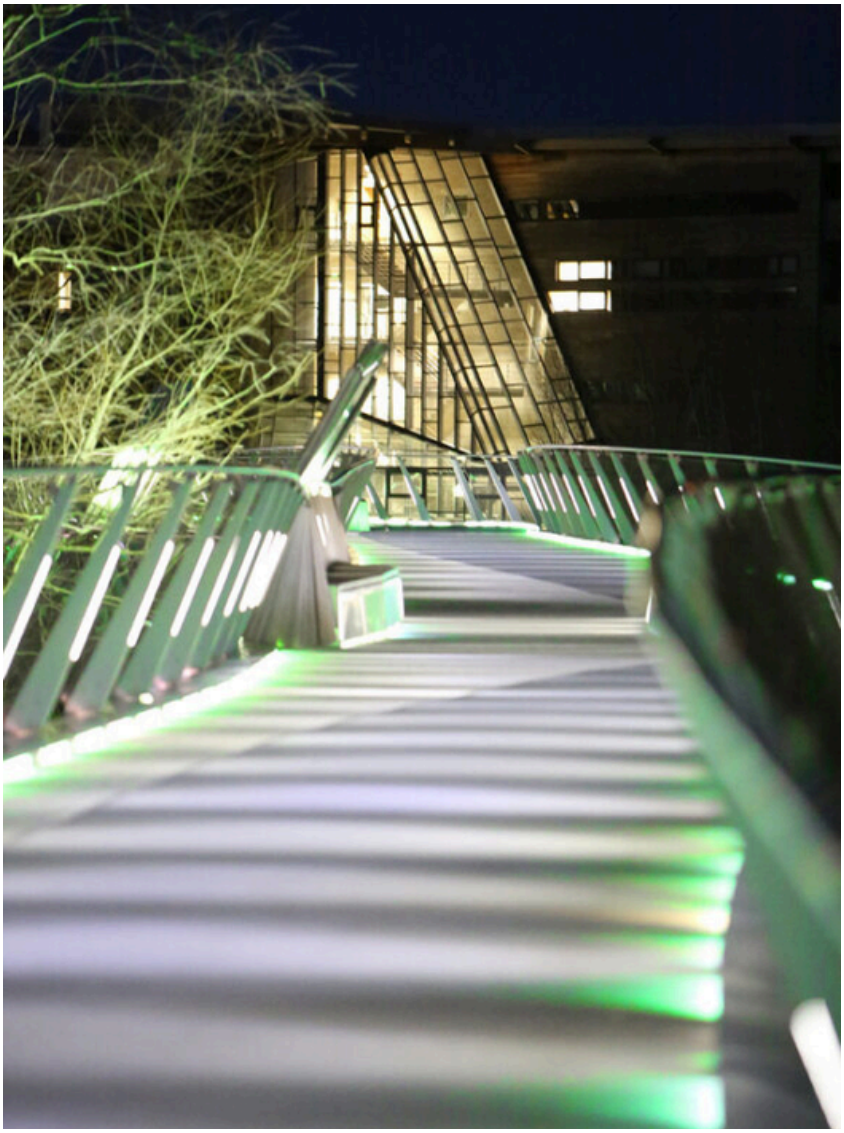
EHS EDI BULLETIN

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH | Education and Health Sciences

ISSUE 10 | OCTOBER 2026



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EDI Faculty Success

There was a cause for celebration in the EHS Faculty during the summer when it was awarded the prestigous Athena Swan Silver award in recognition of it's commitment to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion across the Faculty and the wider university campus.

It is the result of years of work by the Faculty EDI Committee, the six EDI Committees in the Departments and Schools and the Faculty EDI Team. A unique approach of consolidating six individual department/school Athena Swan applications into one Faculty wide application was adopted with the ambitious aim of achieving the silver award.

It is the first time that a consolidation process such as this has been attempted and achieved in Ireland and it is down to the work, effort and commitment of the Faculty EDI Committee members, the people involved in the local EDI Committees (past and present) and the EDI Team in the Faculty led by the Assistant Dean of EDI, Dr. Petra Elftorp.

The national awarding panel recognised the approach as an important 'blueprint' for faculty-level applications and strongly endorsed the scale and quality of the work undertaken. In particular, they highlighted the governance and resourcing of EDI, robust action planning and advocacy work on gender equality, career progression pathways and wider EDI issues.



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH
Education and Health Sciences

Athena Swan Ireland
EQUALITY CHARTER
Silver Award

" ... well done to you and all colleagues in EHS. It is a great acknowledgement and endorsement – it takes a lot of work, and requires a really good culture of collaboration and commitment across the Faculty.
It is clear that EHS is a really strong Faculty with outstanding leadership. Well done to all of you, and thank you for representing UL so well and for adding such value to the institution."
Prof. Shane Kilcommins, UL President

The national Athena Swan silver award ceremony will take place on **December 10th** in University College Dublin.

"This Silver Athena Swan award highlights the fantastic commitment of University of Limerick, Faculty of Education and Health Sciences in bringing about change through impactful and sustainable gender equality initiatives in higher education across Ireland. Congratulations to all those who work so hard to achieve and sustain this recognition."
Dr. Sarah Fink, Head of Athena Swan, Ireland

"This is a significant achievement and is testament to EHS's dedication to creating an equitable and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive in both work and study. It also represents an important contribution to the achievement of UL's strategic goals and brings us another step closer to our shared ambition of being a university of equality".
Prof. Patricia Mannix-McNamara, Interim Director of HREDI, UL

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EDI at Work

The Faculty EHS EDI Committee began implementing their five year action plan following submission of their Athena Swan application at the end of January this year. The work is being driven by the Faculty EDI Team, EDI Committee and the Task Area Groups (TAGs) set up, comprising of interested individuals across the Faculty (see table below for Task action areas).

Task #	Action Area	TAG Lead
TAG 1,2,5	Embedding & Sustaining EDI Student Diversity & Engagement Recruitment	Petra Elftorp, ADEDI Hilary Curley, EDI DO
TAG 3	Promotion and Progression	Ian Sherwin, PESS
TAG 4	Career Development	Jill Murphy, SoNM
TAG 6	Contract and Part-time Staff	Lucie Pollard, SoM
TAG 7	Fair and Equitable Workload	Aine Kearns, SAH
TAG 8	Connection and Engagement	Sandra O'Brien, DoP
TAG 9	EDI Values, Culture & Inclusion	Siobhan Griffin, DoP

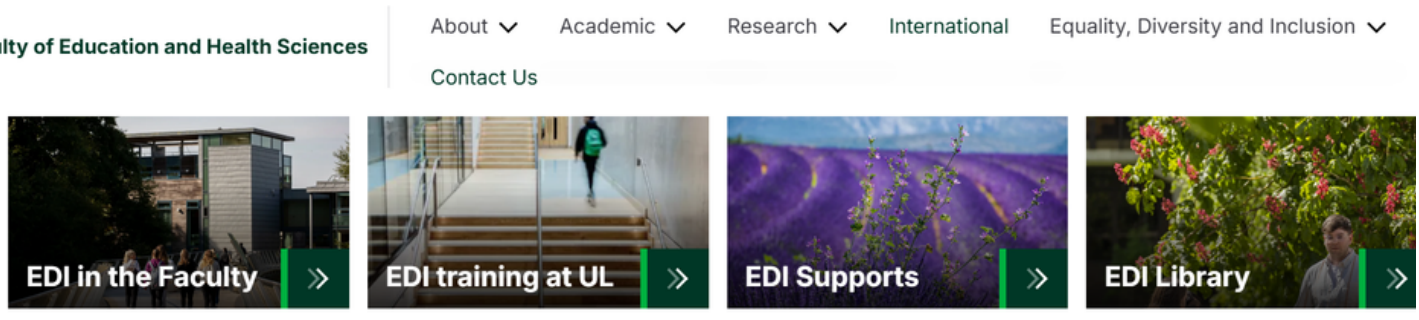


As of October 2026, 29 (32%) of the 90 actions in the five year Faculty Action Plan are in progress. Detail on the actions and report on activity is available to view by all EHS staff by clicking on the activity tracker hosted on the EDI Sharepoint

AS Activity Tracker

The EDI Committees in the six Departments and Schools are currently working on developing their local EDI Action Plans within the Framework of the Faculty Athena Swan Plan and through identifying EDI related issues for attention in their respective units. The local Plans are currently in consultation stage with a view to having them agreed and signed off by Christmas.

The EDI footprint on the Faculty website has been redesigned and updated in line with the new UL website relaunch during the summer. It gives useful information, links and resources. Special thanks to Sinead Liston in the Faculty Office for help in this regard.



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EDI Spotlight Publication

Dilemmas of Social Justice in the Practice of Internationalization at an Irish University



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Journal of International Students, 16(9), 55-84. https://doi.org/10.32674/sk6emj62

Abstract

Policies advancing social inclusion in Irish higher education face new challenges with increased recruitment of students from the Global South. This study explores how staff at a University of Sanctuary in Ireland navigate tensions between internationalization and social justice. Using reflective thematic analysis of interviews with 11 staff and senior managers, two main themes emerged: (1) paradoxes of internationalization (as a tool for diversity, humanitarianism, or commodification) and (2) dilemmas of social justice and sustainability. Participants highlighted border-bound definitions of inclusion and critiqued extractive models of internationalization that reinforce colonial and unsustainable practices. We argue, in line with critical internationalization studies, that different models of internationalization are needed to promote sustainable education, equity, and social justice in higher education.

"This study advances internationalization research by examining how university staff at an Irish University of Sanctuary navigate the complex, often conflicting demands of internationalization and social inclusion. By shifting the analytical lens from student experiences to the institutional logics and structural conditions that shape them, the analysis reveals a persistent dilemma: international students are frequently positioned as central to institutional strategy yet remain peripheral to inclusion infrastructures. University staff are under pressure to provide equitable support to international students, yet inclusion frameworks are designed only for national/domestic students. This tension results in fragmented and unevenly distributed support systems, which explains the disconnect between a university's social justice commitments and the support that international students actually receive, leaving the staff to deal with these ethical dilemmas on an individual basis".

Click images /logos below for links!

EDI Library

UCD is hosting a national event on November 20th, titled ***"Men in EDI: Opening the Conversation in Higher Education."*** This event seeks to create a safe and inclusive environment where participants can examine the role of men in promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Attendees will have the opportunity to connect with others who are dedicated to fostering positive cultural change, as well as gather practical ideas to implement within their own organizations. Click on the banner image for registration.



The national event (above) comes on the heels of a toolkit released during the summer entitled ***"Engaging Men in EDI".*** This publication was created by the UCD Engaging Men in EDI Working Group, formed in 2023 to tackle the issue of men's under-representation in EDI initiatives at University College Dublin.



UCD Engaging Men in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Recommendations Report 2023–2025



Dr. Aoife Gallagher, School of Allied Health in EHS, led an event in the Castletroy Hotel, Limerick on September 10th where participants discussed research findings from the three partner institutions. Picture: Olena Oleksienko/ilovelimerick

ELEVATE

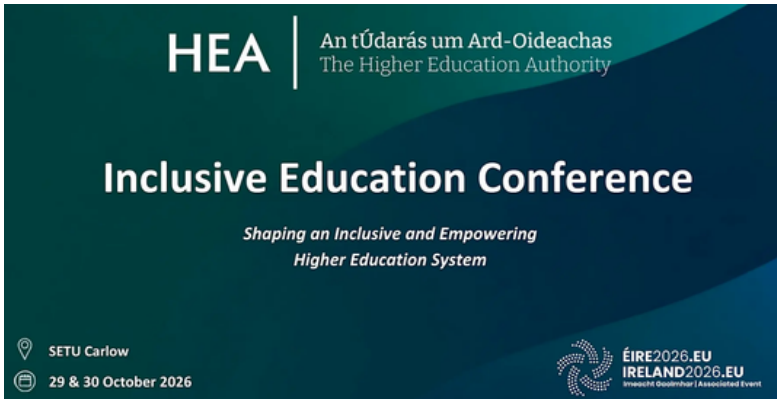
ELEVATE is a joint research project spearheaded by RCSI in partnership with the University of Limerick and UCC, supported by the HEA EDI Enhancement Fund. This project investigates the impact of Work Allocation Models (WAMs) on the career advancement of women academics within Irish higher education and explores ways in which institutions can develop fairer and more gender-responsive methods for distributing academic work.

Based on evidence gathered from the three Irish universities, this project sheds light on the often-overlooked ways in which workload allocation affects promotion opportunities, research productivity, leadership development, and career progression. For more details about the ongoing project, visit their website.

Click images /logos below for links!

EDI News

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is hosting a conference **"*Inclusive Education - Shaping an Inclusive and Empowering Higher Education System*"** in SETU Carlow, on 29th and 30th October 2026, as part of Ireland's EU Presidency. This high-level event brings together leaders, researchers, educators, and policymakers across Irish and international higher education.



Funding is available from the EHS Faculty to support the hosting of EDI related events throughout the year. It is a rolling call and projects will be assessed on four criteria: (a) fit with an EDI theme aligned with the EHS EDI Action Plan or the UL Human Rights and EDI Strategy (b) value for money (c) potential impact (d) projects that benefit or are targeted Faculty wide (rather than individual department or schools). Click on the image to apply.



The next EHS **Faculty Induction** morning is taking place on **November 12th from 9.30 to 11.30** (venue to be confirmed).



It is an informal and informative morning for new (and not so new!) staff, with a chance to get an overview of the Faculty, the supports available, and to connect with colleagues.

Register your interest here.



The recent call for proposals for the HEA supported Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Enhancement Fund has resulted in four interesting research projects involving staff in the University:

"**Beyond Silver: Operationalising Intersectionality in Irish Higher Education**", led by UL through Dr Audrey O'Grady, Department of Biological Sciences.

"**MEAS (Men, Empathy, Action and Solidarity Gender Based Violence Prevention Leadership Programme**)", led by ATU with Maria Healy UL's SVH Prevention and Response Manager.

"**The experience of family carers in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Ireland: a study of staff and students**" led by DCU with Dr Breda Moloney, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UL.

"**Unseen: Understanding non-promotable service and its effect on Early career Women, led** by Maynooth University with Dr Caroline Murphy, Work and Employment Studies, UL.

The new career progression framework for Teaching Staff in UL was approved and signed off for implementation in September this year (2026).



University of Limerick

Policy and Procedures for the Promotion of Teaching Staff

If you have created a resource or if you have come across useful resources or information relevant to EDI in EHS, please e-mail us at ADEDI.ehs@ul.ie or hilary.curley@ul.ie