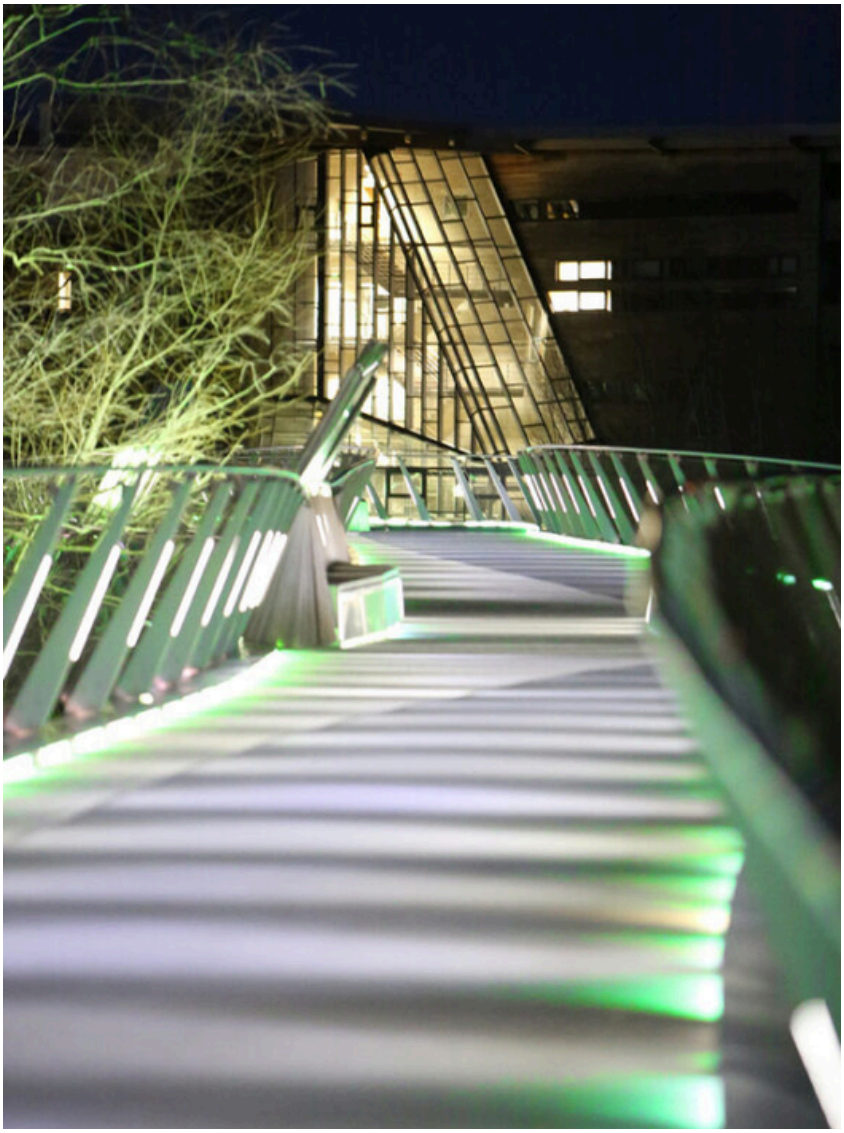
EHS EDI BULLETIN

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH | Education and Health Sciences

ISSUE 8 | FEBRUARY 2026



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Click images /logos below for links!

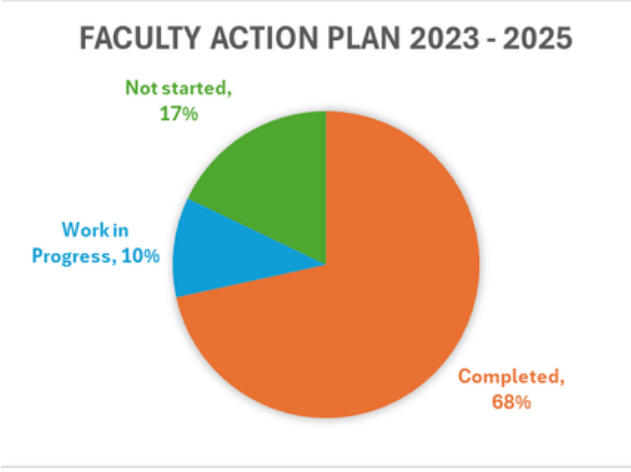
EDI Athena Swan

The EHS Faculty application for an Athena Swan (AS) silver award was submitted in January to Athena Swan Ireland for assessment. The Athena Swan Charter is a framework used to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research across the world.
This submission represents the culmination of three years of dedicated work by the Faculty Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, along with the six Department and School EDI Committees, which merged six individual AS processes into a single, comprehensive Faculty-wide application. It is the first time that this consolidated approach has been undertaken in Ireland, marking a significant milestone for the EHS Faculty. Notification of success or otherwise of the submission will be known by late spring.

Themes in the EHS Silver AS application

- Student enrolment
- Student numbers
- Student attainment
- Staffing detail
- Promotions
- Progression
- Recruitment
- Career supports
- Work practices
- Workload
- Culture & values
- Bullying & harassment
- Inclusion

Application available to view here.



A review of the previous Faculty Action Plan showed that 68% of the actions were completed, 10% were still work in progress and 17% were not started or carried forward to the new action plan (2026 - 2031).

Some achievements to date ...

The first stage of the **new UL clinical teacher/practice educator academic framework** was approved in Q2, 2025. Phase 2 of the process, which involves mapping staff members' roles onto the framework, has commenced.

The School of Allied Health identified eight staff (seven women) at Professor level early in their careers and set a goal to support at least one Full Professor application by 2025. With **two full professors (2 female**) currently, this target has now been achieved.

A significant amount of outreach work was undertaken in the School of Nursing and Midwifery with the target of improving the male student enrolment rate by 1%. **In 2025/26, the proportion of enrolled male students was 6%, up from 3% the previous year.**

Increased resources for EDI in the Faculty through the appointment of an Assistant Dean of EDI (0.5 post in November 2022) and a new full-time, permanent EDI Officer post in March 2025.

Ongoing and focused effort in the Department of Psychology through open days, outreach work and survey research with post-primary school and first-year college students, resulted in **male UG enrolment rates on the BSc Psychology programme rising from 17% in 2021 to 33% in 2025.**

EDI work formally recognised in the new eWAM with the allocation per academic year of 120 hours for chairing EDI committees, 12 hours for departmental membership and 16 hours for faculty membership.

The **new Faculty Induction Toolkit** includes a handbook, a buddy system and a face-to-face faculty induction morning. The toolkit is available to all Schools and Departments.

Click images /logos below for links!

EDI Faculty Picture

The Athena Swan application process required the collection and analysis of data spanning 3 to 5 years across various indicators and themes. A brief Faculty picture is presented below, with more detail available to view in the EHS Faculty application.

Nearly one in five staff (19%) worked part time in EHS in 2024. Of the people who worked part time, 73% were female.

34% of all EHS staff were on non-permanent contracts in 2024.

There were 380 hourly contracted staff in 2024, over half of these were female.

EHS Staff by School/ Department/ Office, 2024

Unit	Male	Female	Total	% F
Department of Psychology	15	39	54	72%
PESS	33	18	51	35%
School of Allied Health	11	74	85	87%
School of Education	35	32	67	48%
School of Medicine	55	91	146	62%
School of Nursing & Midwifery	5	49	54	91%
*Faculty Office	1	27	28	96%
Total	**155**	**330**	**485**	**68%**

**Faculty Office staff numbers include HRI and Healthy UL staff.*

EHS Staff by Category, 2024

Category	% Female	Total
Academic	61%	205
Clinical	67%	64
Teaching	67%	28
Research	70%	66
PMSS	90%	97
Technical	46%	24
Other	0%	1
Overall	**68%**	**485**

EHS Total Students, 2024

Level	Female	Male	NS*	Total	% Female
UG	1,995	1,087	10	3092	65%
PG Taught	1,180	484	8	1672	71%
PG Research	139	125	0	264	53%
Total	**3,314**	**1,696**	**18**	**5,028**	**66%**

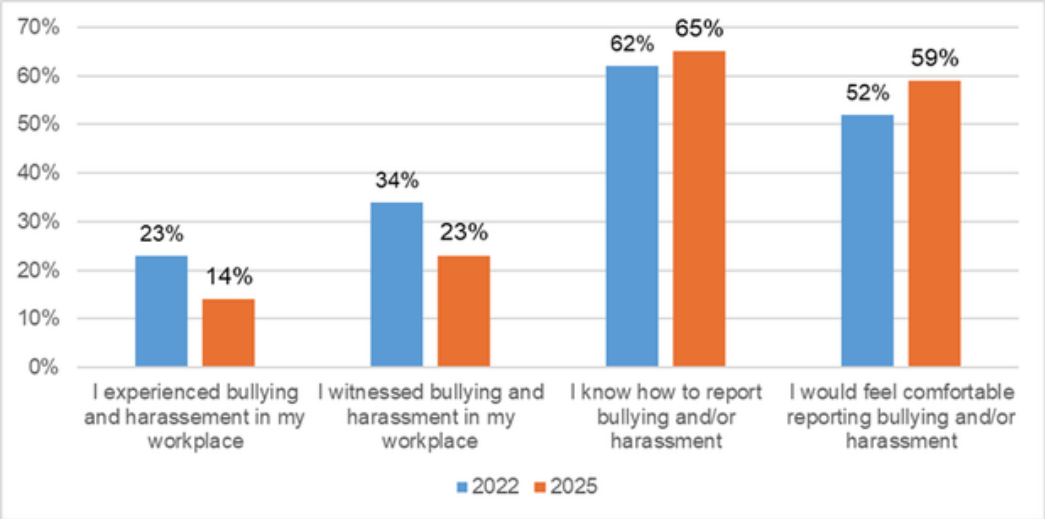
**NS=not stated*

Click images /logos below for links!

EDI Survey

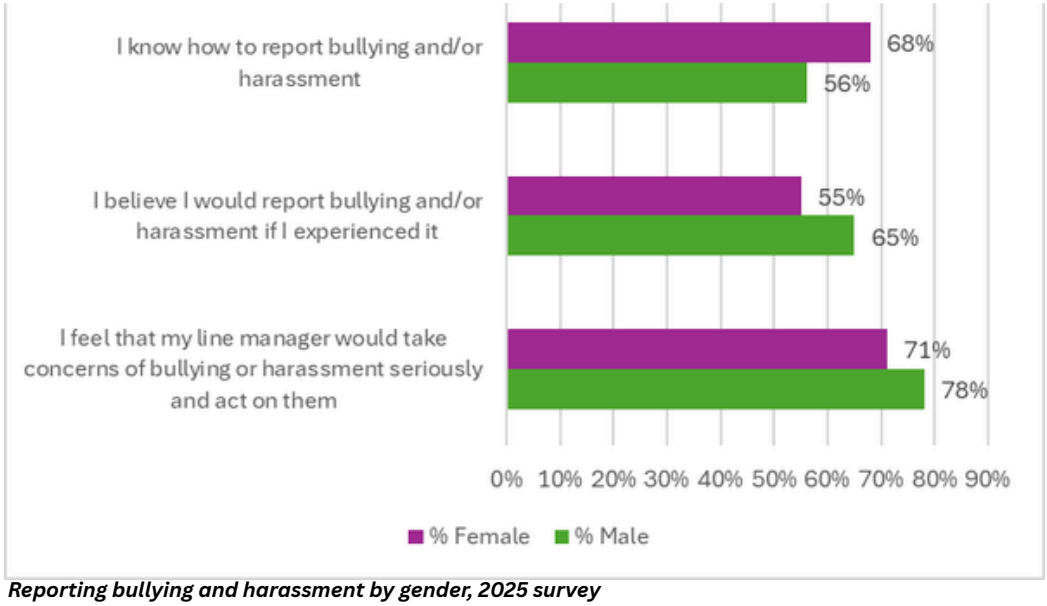
In March 2025, an EDI online survey was issued to all EHS staff as part of the Athena Swan application preparation process. It was a wide ranging survey aimed at capturing EDI related progress, issues and concerns. We had a response rate of 66% across the Faculty and would like to thank all of the respondents who gave of their time and insights.

The findings from the survey proved to be extremely useful and were central to the preparation of the application. In subsequent EDI e-bulletins, we will share feedback on various aspects of the survey results. This edition summarises responses to the questions on bullying and harassment, an issue we have identified as one of our three key priorities in our new 5 year action plan. More detailed information is available to view in the application.



Experiences of aspects of bullying or harassment, 2022 and 2025 survey comparison

There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of people who have experienced and witnessed bullying and/or harassment within the Faculty over the past three years - down from 23% in 2022 to 14% in 2025.



Reporting bullying and harassment by gender, 2025 survey

Knowledge of reporting inappropriate behaviour in the Faculty is low with just 56% of female respondents and 68% of male respondents saying that know how to report.

The proportion of respondents who would report bullying or harassment if they experienced it is lower again - 55% of female respondets; 65% of male respondents.

"Regarding bullying harassment/ sexual harassment, more often there are cases of 'inappropriate-ness' which probably wouldn't warrant a word as strong as harassment. It is unclear to me how to report or deal with this. Also it is disappointing when you hear about reports and complaints that are made but seemingly have zero repercussions. This makes it less likely for anyone to report things – what is the point?"

Female academic on full-time, fixed-term contract

Resources for dealing with negative behaviour below. Click on images for access.

Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures for Students and Employees

Access Speak Out

EDI Spotlight Publication

Silenced and stressed: impact of reporting workplace bullying and harassment for academic staff in Irish higher education

Vol 18, Issue 3, 30th May 2025

Authors: Levina Reeves (TUS Limerick; School of Education, UL); *Niamh Whelan (TUS Limerick);* ***Mark J. Campbell (Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, UL); Grainne Hayes (Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, UL).***



Abstract

Workplace well-being is an increasingly critical issue influenced by systemic factors, particularly in academic settings. This study investigated workplace bullying (WPB) and harassment in higher education institutions in Ireland, drawing upon the Ottawa Charter and conservation of resources theory to contextualise the impacts on employee well-being.

Twenty-five participants responded to a survey that first measured occurrences and impact of WPB. The survey was followed by open-ended questioning eliciting narratives around the experience of reporting WPB to reveal organisational responses and subsequent impacts of reporting WPB.

The prevalence of barriers to reporting showed that out of 25 participants, 18 experienced barriers to reporting WPB. Seventeen participants documented the negative impacts of barriers to reporting WPB. Lack of human resource management (HRM) implementation incurred organisational consequences, such as increased staff turnover and a negative impact on institutional culture.

"... these results highlight the urgent need for organisations to tackle WPB and the barriers to reporting it. Factors such as inadequate HRM action, management pressure, and job insecurity foster a culture of silence. There is a notable deficiency in leadership and HRM policies, coupled with a cyclical academic culture perpetuating silence through power imbalances and threats. The psychological and career impacts on individuals lead to organisational issues like high turnover and a toxic culture. To address this, organisations must implement reforms, strengthen support systems, enhance education, ensure transparent reporting, and commit to accountability, ultimately improving workplace dignity and environment."

Click images /logos below for links!

EDI at Work

The EDI Committee at the **School of Nursing and Midwifery** has launched a podcast series titled 'Nursing and Midwifery: A Career For All'. This initiative aims to spark discussion about the wide range of career opportunities available through the study of nursing and midwifery, highlighting why this field of study is an exciting option.
Co-ordinated by Dr. Steven Byrne, co-Chair of the School EDI Committee and funded by the School, the inaugaral podcast features a fascinating discussion with Morris Lynch, a staff nurse in UCH, Limerick and Justin Gleeson, a Clinical Midwife Specialist for the HSE Substance Misuse Team.
You can listen to it here.



Postgraduate research networking event in the SoE, 2025

Work in the **School of Education's EDI Committee** highlighted the disconnect or disengagement between postgraduate research students and the School. Survey findings revealed that only 50% of respondents felt supported by the School with many expressing a desire for increased visibility of their voices and experiences.
A working group was formed within the School's EDI Committee, led by Dr. Rachel Lenihan, to address this issue. Discussions were held with students to find out what would be of most benefit to them and their needs. In April 2025, the first networking event for postgraduate research students took place, focusing on career development. Thirteen participants attended and provided overwhelmingly positive feedback.
Following this success, a second event was organized in November 2026, concentrating on the theme of "Communicating Research." This networking get-together will now be an annual event in the School.

The first **EHS Faculty Induction Morning** took place on 2nd December 2025 with over 40 participants. Mary Heuston, Faculty Manager, and Dr. Petra Elftorp, Assistant Dean of EDI (ADEDI), provided an overview of the faculty structure, supports and opportunities for staff engagement. Colleagues from the Faculty Office were also present, giving staff a chance to put faces to familiar names.
The session offered space for discussion with strong interest expressed in creating more opportunities for staff to connect on campus. A second induction morning, which will be open to all staff, is scheduled for the Spring semester, date yet to be confirmed.

Engage in Education is a charity established to encourage students from families living in Limerick City to enhance their career opportunities by attending third level colleges.

Lynn O'Doherty, the Student Recruitment Officer in the **EHS Faculty Office**, teamed up with the charity and her UL Faculty colleagues to arrange a campus visit for forty sixth-class primary school students from a variety of DEIS schools in the Limerick region late last year. This was followed by a separate event for over forty fifth-year secondary school students, where they were introduced to the university and the different programmes, activities, resources and supports available. This event is set to become an annual date in the calendar moving forward.



5th year students from Limerick region on the UL campus

Click images /logos below for links!

EDI at Work



Members of the Women in Medicine Society, School of Medicine.

The student society, **Women in Medicine,** held their second annual conference on Saturday 7th February. This year the title of the conference was "Advancing Medicine Together Through Innovation, Compassion, and Health Equity" and funded through the **School of Medicine** EDI fund, specially targeted at student events.

Guest Speakers included Dr Siobhan Neville sharing her role in shaping the Paediatrics Inclusion Service that is run in the Mid-West. She was followed by Dr. Mya Nguyen, Consultant in Emergency Medicine in the Mid-West, who spoke about her career journey while juggling family commitments.

The afternoon saw two panel sessions – one where interns shared their experiences with the audience, and the other with school of medicine tutors who talked about their own journeys, challenges and experiences. The event concluded with a key note lecture from Dr Siobhán Grimes, Clinical Director at the Bon Secours Hospital Limerick.



As part of the national 'Women in Sport' week March 2nd - 8th, **PESS** is organising a Q&A session with graduates of the MSc in Applied Sports Coaching as they discuss their coaching practice and journeys on Tuesday, March 3rd at 7pm. The event is free and the focus of the evening is on quality coaching and quality coach development. Coaches from all sports are encouraged to attend.



A webinar on inclusive research was hosted on Monday 19th January by the autism@ul Special Interest Group. Organised by Michelle O'Donogue, **School of Allied Health** and supported through the **EHS EDI Fund,** the webinar featured Dr. Jo Grace, founder of 'The Sensory Projects' based in the UK (thesensoryprojects.co.uk). This is an initiative dedicated to making high-quality sensory experiences accessible to everyone, particularly for individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities or autism. During the webinar, Jo charted her own journey of inclusive research that she undertook during her doctoral studies, working collaboratively with people with the most profound levels of intellectual disability.

EDI News

A **new EHS Strategy** is in the process of being developed with four strategic priorities identified, linking in with the framework at Institution level:

- Research Intensification
- Academic Transformation
- Creation of an Academic Health Sciences System
- Enhancing Our Culture to Support Our Goals

Recently, the Faculty Management Committee had the chance to review key performance indicators during an away day in January. They have been tasked with developing unit-based strategic priorities by March 13th, which will be incorporated into the wider EHS strategic development plan. An institution-wide consultation process will begin in late March. More information to follow shortly.

Interim Director of HREDI in UL



Professor Patricia Mannix-McNamara has taken on the role of Interim Human Rights and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (HREDI) Director in January of this year replacing Dr. Marie Connolly who retired last April.

We look forward to working closely with Patricia and wish her the best of luck in the new role!



A recent publication 'Transforming Gender Equality and Inclusion Within Higher Education Ireland' (2026) thematically reflects on and analyses the nature of change and transformation with respect to gender equality, inclusion and diversity across higher education in Ireland. Dr. Marie Connolly (formerly HREDI Director here in UL) is one of the editors of this book which argues that power, gender dynamics and social relations can be challenged and altered through collective action, transforming the national policy framework, establishing a comprehensive evidence base, adopting new policy and approaches to promote equality in practice. The book is open access and free to view online here

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Interesting article recently in the Washington Post about the push back on DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion) in higher education institutions in the United States ... "*Of the 184 universities that made faculty diversity pledges, at least 108 have fully or partially rolled them back, according to a Post survey and analysis of public statements and news coverage. An additional 30 have renamed or reorganized their DEI offices but not necessarily eliminated the programming. There was no evidence of a rollback at 34 schools*".

Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

Equity Excellence Empowerment

Maynooth University officially opened the **National Centre for Inclusive Higher Education (NCIHE)**, Ireland's first national centre dedicated to advancing equity, inclusion, and access in higher education in November, 2025.

The new Centre aims to create solutions to reduce inequality and expand opportunity across Ireland's higher education system.

It will lead a coordinated national effort to understand and implement what works to support students and staff from underrepresented and underserved communities to access, succeed in, and progress beyond higher education.

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

EDI News



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



Horizon Europe - Cluster 2: Research and innovation funding opportunities. Future projects should deliver on three intervention areas (a) Green transition (b) Digital transition (c) a more resilient, competitive, inclusive and democratic Europe. All topics are expected to include a gender dimension in their research. **Next call for proposals opens on May 2026**.



Comprehensive anti-racism training is being offered as part of the EMBRACED project - a collaborative initiative across Irish Higher Education Institutions. It is taking place in UL on **Wednesday 25th March, 2026** and open to all UL staff, running from 9.30 - 4.00 p.m. in the Analog Devices Building, AD1-046. This workshop is designed to equip UL staff with practical knowledge and skills to recognise, address, and prevent racism in our educational environment. Click here for further details and registration information.

The first ever Age Friendly University Teaching Programme started last September when 32 older learner participants began their student journey.
This initiative, spearheaded by the Age Friendly University Committee at UL, aims to promote the engagement of older adults (aged 65+) in university life.
Lecturers in different Faculties across the institution generously responded to a call last year to open their lecture halls to older learners. With the help of GPS, Academic Registry, IT services and Library services, the first pilot programme was rolled out.
The feedback has been hugely positive - lecturers talked about how enjoyable it is to interact with older learners. The learners talked about the joy of learning and interacting with younger students.
The invitation is now open for EHS lecturers to participate in the upcoming Academic Year 2025/26. There is no additional workload involved and there is a maximum of five AFU students per class. If any EHS lecturer or course director is interested in participating in this initiative, please contact Hilary or Petra at ADEDI.ehs@ul.ie for more information by **March 2nd**.



Some of the AFU learners with UL support staff at an informal coffee event in December 2026

The first Job Evaluation call for 2026 is now open with a closing date of Tuesday, 31 March 2026, at 12pm (Midday). A second call will open later in the year. Further details available here on HR Processes and Procedures.