



**Maynooth University  
Human Resources  
Office**

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# **The Statement of Policy on Equality**

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# Maynooth University Statement of Policy on Equality

## 1. Introduction

The provisions of this Policy on Equality emerge from the context of a desire on behalf of the University to foster equality of opportunity for all members of National University of Ireland, Maynooth ("the University") both in respect of employment and access to education. The Policy is adopted for a three year period, after which time it will be the subject of discussion and review. Implementation of the Policy will be monitored on an annual basis. The University will strive to give effect to the provisions of this Policy.

All staff and students are responsible for ensuring that they comply with this Policy and that equal opportunities principles are respected.

The Statement of Policy on Equality (the "Policy") includes a statement of the policies of the University in respect of:

- access to the University and to university education by economically or socially disadvantaged people, by people who have a disability and by people from sections of society significantly under-represented in the student body, and
- equality, including gender equality, in all activities of the University

as required by section 36 (1) of the Universities Act, 1997 and this Policy has been prepared pursuant to that section. The University also acknowledges its responsibilities and duties as an employer/service provider under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2007 not to discriminate on nine grounds including age, disability, membership of the Traveller community, marital status, family status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic or national origin.

This Policy sets out the general principles which will underlie the University's policy on equality in higher education. It deals with these principles in relation to three main areas: employment equality, equality of educational access and attainment among students, and general equality issues.

The University is committed to equality in higher education, both within the University and within the higher education system as a whole in Ireland. It recognises that the obstacles to equality are complex and can include deep-rooted structural biases as well as formal barriers. It seeks to develop and implement policies and procedures which promote equality and which avoid unfair discrimination on grounds of age, disability, membership of the Traveller community, marital status, family status, gender, religion, social class, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

The University regards equality as an essential component of quality assurance which is aimed at improving the quality of education and related services, while at the same time ensuring the maintenance of proper academic standards.

This Policy applies to the University's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants who are not employees and students.

## 2. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

The University will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

This Policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of employment, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy. This Policy also applies to access to education as further described in paragraph 4 below.

## 3. Employment Equality

The University's commitment to equality entails the following:

- 3.1. Ensuring that all applicants for employment with the University are considered and recruited or selected on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities, and having regard to the principles of this Policy;
- 3.2. Ensuring that all employees of the University are trained, appraised, given access to relevant work experience, promoted and otherwise treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities, and having regard to the principles of this Policy;
- 3.3. Ensuring, in so far as reasonable and practicable, that Boards of Assessment for appointment or promotion are gender balanced and are aware of the principles of non-discrimination on all nine grounds;
- 3.4. Encouraging gender balance on University boards and committees as well as awareness of the principles of non discrimination on all nine grounds;
- 3.5. Promoting working arrangements within the University which will facilitate staff in combining family and vocational responsibilities;
- 3.6. Encouraging the participation of women and men in academic disciplines and other areas of University employment in which they are currently under-represented.
- 3.7. Disability Discrimination

If staff are disabled, or become disabled in the course of employment with the University, they are encouraged to inform the University about their condition. This is to enable the University to support staff as much as possible. Staff may also wish to advise their line manager **OR** the Human Resources Office of any reasonable accommodation to their working conditions or the duties of their job which they consider to be necessary, or which would assist them in the performance of their duties. Line managers **OR** the Human Resources Office may wish to consult with staff and with their medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable accommodation.

Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and employees will be accommodated in so far as possible having regard to the principles of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2007. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for the University to accommodate the suggested adjustments and it will ensure that staff are provided with information as to the basis of the decision not to make any adjustments.

### 3.8. Termination of employment

The University will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees.

The University will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and uniformly for all workers, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

### 3.9. Fixed-Term Employees

The University will monitor its use of fixed-term employees, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The University will, where relevant, monitor their progress within the University to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

### 3.10. Part-Time Employees

The University will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression with University to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities.

## **4. Educational Equality for Students**

The University's commitment to educational equality entails the following:

- 4.1. Promoting equality of access to all educational programmes in the University, and in particular access by economically or socially disadvantaged people, by people who have a disability and by people from sections of society significantly under-represented in the student body;
- 4.2. Promoting more gender balanced intake and participation rates across University programmes, and across third-level educational institutions in Ireland having regard to the principles of this Policy;
- 4.3. Promoting, through the provision of appropriate support mechanisms, optimum individual educational attainment, as measured by completion rates, examination performance and progression to higher-level degree and diploma courses;
- 4.4. Promoting equality in the treatment of students in interactions with staff, in relations within the student body, in the conduct of examinations, and in the provision of services to students;
- 4.5. Promoting equality of participation in positions of leadership and responsibility within the student body (e.g. club and society committees).

## **5. General Equality Issues**

The University's commitment to general equality issues entails the following:

- 5.1. Ensuring that the language used in University communications is gender-inclusive and non discriminatory;
- 5.2. Developing and modifying the physical plant and relevant services of the University, in order to facilitate the participation in the affairs and activities of the University of those with disabilities, whether as staff or as students;
- 5.3. Upholding the dignity of all women and men in the University, whether staff or as students, and combating all forms of harassment, including harassment by reference to age, disability, membership of the Traveller community, marital status, family status, gender, religion, social class, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins;
- 5.4. Pursuing a policy of co-officiality and parity of esteem for the two official languages of the State, with special regard to the preservation, promotion and use of the Irish language;
- 5.5. Supporting the preservation and promotion of the distinctive cultures of Ireland.

## **6. Structures and Implementation**

The University shall have an Equality Committee, chaired by the President (or nominee) and with representatives of academic and non-academic staff, and of the students. The University will appoint an Equality Officer who will be a member of the Equality Committee. The functions of the committee will include:

- 6.1. Drawing up a series of detailed recommendations relating to the main areas of inequality which are or might be encountered in the University;
- 6.2. Publicising the equality policy among staff and students and providing for the training and guidance of staff and students in matters relating to equality issues within the University;
- 6.3. Collecting data and promoting research relevant to equality issues within the University;
- 6.4. Identifying and recommending positive action, including the setting of targets, to counter or remedy instances or actual sources of inequality or unfair discrimination within the University;
- 6.5. Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the equality policy.

## **7. Breaches of the Policy**

- 7.1. Violation of this Policy can result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for students or dismissal for employees.
- 7.2. Any interference, coercion, restraint or reprisal against a person complaining of discrimination or participating in the resolution of a complaint of discrimination, is considered a violation of this Policy and a disciplinary offence.
- 7.3. Prevailing upon management, trade unions, colleagues or students to practise unfair discrimination or to act in a way which is contrary to the spirit of this Policy is considered a violation of the policy.
- 7.4. Violation of this Policy is a disciplinary offence and staff or student disciplinary procedures may be applied as appropriate.
- 7.5. Any individual with a concern, grievance, or complaint of discrimination or a breach of this Policy should utilise the appropriate procedure from those available. Advice on which procedure is appropriate may be sought from the Department of Human Resources (Staff) / Registrar's Office (Students)