Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group Annual Report
December 2024

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Appendices

Purpose of Report

ATU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group is required to produce an annual report on the progress of implementation of the university's Gender Action Plan and other EDI initiatives, and this report is to be shared with the Governing Body and all staff. This report, for the academic year 2023/24, will be uploaded to the EDI SharePoint so as to be available to all staff and students.

EDI Steering Group

ATU's EDI Steering Group was established in 2023 and meets four times each year. Its purpose is to provide leadership and accountability for equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the University's activities and to assist in good governance. The Steering Group's membership includes both academic and functional areas and representatives of Faculties, HR, Student Support Services, and EDI.

EDI Steering Group Membership

Ainm	Ionadaí	Meetings AY 23/24
Prof. Jacqueline McCormack (Chairperson)	VP for EDI & Online Development	3/4
AnneMarie McCormack	Representing Academic Affairs	3/4
Dr Breda McTaggart	Faculty Head representing Business & Social Sciences Faculty grouping	1/4
Cait Noone	Faculty Head representing Creative and Cultural Practices Faculty grouping	3/4
Dr Chris O'Malley	VP representing Research & Engagement VPs	1/4
Debbie Molloy	Representative Students, T&L (replaced Roisin McCormack)	1/1
Des O'Reilly	HoD representing Engineering Faculty Grouping	3/4
Gerald Gavin	Manager representing Academic Affairs	3/4
Jerry Bird	Representing Science Faculty Grouping	2/2
Mary Nestor	EDI Manager ATU Galway Mayo	4/4
Rod Toner	Manager representing Human Resources	2/2
Roisin McCormack	Representative Students, T&L	3/3
Rory McMorrow	Representative Students, T&L	2/4
Dr Sharon McLaughlin	EDI Lead ATU Donegal	3/4
Dr Simon Stephens	Representative Academic Affairs	3/4
Suresh Pillai	Senior academic Faculty of Science	3/4
Tom Reilly	EDI Manager ATU Sligo	4/4
Dr Valerie McTaggart	Substituted for Dr Breda McTaggart	1/1
Members of Committee from AY 2024/25		
Thomas Smyth	Replaced Jerry Bird	

ATU EDI and Gender Identity & Expression Policies & Procedure

ATU's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Gender Identity & Expression (GI&E) Policy and Procedure have been approved and are accessible to all staff and students on the EDI SharePoint along with a short explainer video on both.

Additional supporting materials and training was delivered following approval of GI&E Procedure, the process for which we hope will conclude before the 2024/25 academic term begins.

To support embedding the ATU's Gender Identity & Expression Policy, Trans Inclusivity and Pronouns training was offered to all staff in February and May 2024 and the EDI team provided three training sessions on the GI&E procedure in June attended by 45 staff members from HR, Academic Affairs, Access, Student Services and the Registrar offices.

ATU recognises that students may wish to use a preferred name for student email, Teams, Moodle / Blackboard and student ID card, without having legally changed their name. The GI&E procedure enables students who wish to use a preferred name for the duration of their studies at ATU to do so by completing an online form on the EDI SharePoint accessed via each of the campus Student Hubs.

As per the GI&E policy and procedure, staff who wish to initiate a change of name or use a preferred name can contact their campus HR Office.

Implementation of ATU's Gender Action Plan

In September 2022 ATU agreed a three-year Gender Action Plan to address gender inequalities which had been identified in the university and its legacy colleges.

The ATU EDI Steering Group is responsible for supporting and driving the implementation of the ATU Gender Action Plan, to identify and resolve potential issues and barriers.

Overview

Overall, 41% of the actions are complete, 33% are in progress and 16% are not achieved. This represents an improvement from September 2023 when 25% of the actions were complete.

	September 2023	March 2024	December 2024
Green - complete	11	17	20
Amber - ongoing	18	17	16
Red – not achieved	15	15	13
Total	44	49	49

Progress

These actions represent significant progress in terms of governance and structures, the development of the EDI Policy framework and progress in ensuring an inclusive recruitment process. They are foundational actions which will have a significant impact on embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into the activities of the University.

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made, the University cannot become complacent, and the focus of the EDI Steering Group is upon the actions which have not been achieved, set out in ***Appendix A***. The Steering Group continue to review progress.

Summary

Overall ATU is making good progress in implementing its Gender Action Plan, particularly given the organisational circumstances arising from the merger of three Institutes and St Angela's College to form a new University.

The EDI Steering Group, as the body responsible for driving the implementation of the Gender Action Plan, will continue to receive progress reports, identifying actions and priorities for the final year of the Plan.

ATU Athena Swan Bronze Award Application

ATU's Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team (SAT) was established in December 2023 and began its work the following month under the guidance of its Chairperson Mary Loftus, a lecturer with the Dept. of Computing & Electronic Engineering, ATU Sligo. The SAT's six Working Groups were formed in February and meet regularly feeding in their work to the full monthly SAT meeting working to the project timeline below.

Recruit Equality Champions — June 24 → Run Survey & Focus Groups — Oct 24 → Analysis — Nov 24 → Write-up — Dec 25 → Submit — Apr 25

Critical to this work will be the data gathered by the recent Athena Swan Staff Survey. 980 colleagues completed the staff survey, delivering a 40% response rate with representation from across the campuses and the different staff groups.

Academic	423
Professional and Support Services	430
Research	29
Senior Management	59
Another option not listed	23
Prefer not to say	12

ATU Donegal	261
ATU Galway / Mayo	318
ATU Sligo (inc St Angela's)	374
Prefer not to say	23

The next stage of the process will see the staff survey data analysed, and a report provided which will include identified themes for further investigation by a number of focus groups. In addition to drafting the university's Athena Swan bronze Award the SAT will draft a Gender Action Plan (2024 – 2026) to address matters identified in the survey.

It is expected that preliminary findings from the data will be shared with colleagues, and a draft of the of the new Gender Action Plan to be completed early in Semester 2.

Progress reports on ATU's current Gender Action Plan are accessible to all staff and students via the EDI SharePoint.

Aurora Programme 2024/25

Expressions of Interest opened on the 4th of September for the Aurora Programme 2024/25.

Aurora, an annual programme run by AdvanceHE, is open to ATU academic & PMSS staff who are not currently in management roles to enable participants explore and develop leadership skills.

ATU's Gender Action Plan commits to support, and fund continued participation in the Aurora programme annually, for a minimum of twelve female staff.

The Aurora programme is administered and funded by the EDI team. The total cost of last year's programme was €18,853, which accounts for 20% of the team's annual budgetary allocation which has remained unchanged for 2024.

On completion of last year's programme, the EDI team completed a review of the 2023/24 programme which incorporates feedback from ATU's participants, see *Appendix B*.

The programme is delivered primarily online and includes workshops on identity; impact and voice; power and politics; core leadership skills; adaptive leadership skills and optional networking sessions. The EDI Office also arrange and fund mentee training and facilitate mentoring for participants from the university's wider management team.

All higher education institutions have a statutory obligation to promote gender balance among staff and students. ATU has committed to advancing the Second HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions recommendations through the implementation of the university's Gender Action Plan and related human rights and equality initiatives.

STEM Passport for Inclusion

Over 400 transition year students from Roscommon, Mayo, Galway, Sligo and Donegal were honoured at the Atlantic Technological University's STEM Passport Awards Ceremony held at ATU's Sligo campus on Monday, 4th November 2024.

The STEM Passport for Inclusion Programme was created by Dr Katriona O'Sullivan of Maynooth University and is supported by Science Foundation Ireland, Microsoft and Optum.

In Ireland, according to the Higher Education Outcomes report, only 19.6% of ICT graduate degrees are awarded to women. Atlantic Technological University has been working hard across all nine campuses to improve the number of women in their STEM courses.

ATU is a partner on the programme which provides students with hands-on experience in programming and technology as well as mentoring on various STEM careers and seeks to address inequalities in access to STEM careers among secondary school students in socially disadvantaged communities.

ATU's STEM Passport programme is actively encouraging DEIS schools to apply for spaces on the programme for the 2024/2025 school year and the 2025/2026 school year.

Preventing & Responding to Gender-Based Violence

ATU recognises the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in Irish society and is committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining an environment and a culture in which GBV, in all its forms, will not be tolerated.

ATU is finalising a new policy on Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence and will have new procedures in place in the coming months for anyone who wishes to make a formal report. When approved, these will replace ATU's Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence and Harassment policy which will remain in place until then.

ATU is committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe and respectful environment and culture across ATU, with zero-tolerance for all forms of GBV. Given the prevalence of GBV in Irish society, and at third level, we understand that many people are impacted by it. For this reason, the University is developing its bespoke ATU RESPECT programme. As part of this programme, a new suite of trainings and accompanying resources are being developed covering understanding GBV, ATU Policy, responding to disclosures of GBV, being an active bystander, self-care, and supports.

Race Equality Working Group

As advised in the HEA Race Equality Implementation Plan, ATU has established a university-wide Race Equality Working Group to develop an institutional action plan to embed the antiracism principles in the policies, procedures, curriculum and culture of the university.

Expressions of Interest to join the proposed Race Equality Working Group opened in May '24 with priority given to colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds with lived experience, as those most impacted by race inequalities.

Additionally, the EDI team ensured gender balance, campus representation and representation from a variety of roles and career stages across both academic and professional management and support staff, as well as student representation.

The only in-person meeting of the Working Group was facilitated by Dr Lucy Michael, co-author of the HEA Race Equality Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions, on September 5th on the Mayo campus, at which the Group's mission, priority actions and draft Terms of Reference were framed.

This group will continue to meet on a six-weekly basis, over an eighteen-month period, to progress the ATU Race Equality Action Plan.

The Working Group is supported by the EDI Office and will require the university's ongoing support to progress this important work.

EDI Activity Support Fund 2024/25

Following the success of last year's pilot EDI Activity Support Fund EDI has reopened the fund for the 2024/25 academic year. A review of the 2023/24 pilot is provided in the *Appendix C*.

The purpose of this initiative is to further mainstream EDI principles throughout the university community by providing financial support from the EDI budget to relevant innovative projects or initiatives that without the necessary funding, would not in part or full be realised.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Activity Support Fund

The Fund is open to staff and students with a minimum and maximum funding per project of €500 to €3,000. Collaborative and university-wide initiatives are encouraged.

As expected it was a highly competitive process with 30 applications from across the university community. Funding has been provided to 10 projects to be delivered over the 2024/25 academic year.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Enhancement Fund 2024

Earlier this year the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) launched its first call for applications under the EDI Enhancement Fund 2024.

The objectives of the fund are to encourage innovative approaches to addressing gender inequality, ending sexual violence and harassment (ESVH); to address racial and ethnic inequality across HEIs; to support the achievement of national policy objectives, and to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration as a means to achieve national transformation.

ATU's application led by the university SVHP Manager Caitríona Gleeson and in collaboration with the 9 other HEIs has received the maximum grant available of €74,940 for **Mobilising Men as Leaders in Gender Violence Prevention in Higher Education in Ireland.**

The overall objective of the project is to empower a diversity of men in gender-based violence prevention work through transformational training, supporting them as leaders in HEI's and engaging them as co-creators of transformational initiatives to grow an intervarsity community of men preventing gender-based violence in Ireland.

Leadership Programme for Technological Universities

A leadership course has been developed in collaboration with TUS, MTU, TU Dublin, ATU, SETU, IADT and Dundalk IT entitled Effective Leadership for an Inclusive Higher Education. This course aims to further enhance leadership capabilities within the Technological Higher Education sector in Ireland and has been supported through the HEA Gender Equality Enhancement Fund.

Following an open call to SL2/SL3 Academic staff and CSM and above for PMSS Managers, ATU has selected 6 participants (4 female and 2 male) to join the programme which began on 14th November.

This first delivery of the programme is a pilot, and the expectation is that, following evaluation and review, it will be run annually, as demand dictates.

Age Friendly University

ATU is considering making a submission to join the Age-Friendly University (AFU) Global Network. A working group has been established and is led by Kate Brown a lecturer in Intergenerational Learning in ATU Sligo, with support of the EDI team.
The EDI Steering Group has endorsed this work to achieve Age Friendly University status, thus providing recognition to a body of work already underway in the university and this proposal is with the UPT for a final decision.

The AFU Global Network is committed to creating an age-friendly and age-inclusive world and advancing the unique contributions institutions of higher education can make in a globally ageing world.

ATU is committed to creating conditions whereby students and staff are treated equitably and inclusively regardless of a number of specific characteristics, including age. ATU currently undertakes a range of activities which align with the Principles of an AFU.

Staff and students, and relevant external stakeholders and ATU retirees have been invited to contribute to this application by reflecting on how their current work, study, research, and/or community engagement activities align with the Age-Friendly University Principles.

ATU were shortlisted for the National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards 2024, in the Age-Friendly Active and Healthy Ageing category. This recognises the programme of intergenerational work that has been taking place in Sligo since 2016, including the Creative Generations Festival which continues to be supported by the EDI Activity Support Fund.

Public Sector Human Rights & Equality Duty

The Public Sector Duty is a legal obligation on public bodies, provided for in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of public sector staff and service users.

This positive duty requires ATU to embed equality and human rights in all its functions and integrate this obligation into its annual report and strategic planning cycles. IHREC advises that implementation of the Duty needs to be coordinated and embedded across planning processes within an organisation requiring senior management leadership as well as engagement of staff with knowledge and expertise across different organisational functions, roles and levels within the organisation.

Section 42(2) requires public bodies to publish in their strategic plan a human rights and equality assessment, the policies, plans and actions which will be put in place to address the issues raised in that assessment and to report on progress and achievements on an annual basis, in a manner that is accessible to the public. ATU is currently not meeting these statutory reporting obligations. IHREC began monitoring implementation of the Duty last year, and monitoring of the publishing requirements of public bodies for 2024 will take place between September and December 2024, after which public bodies can review the information gathered and amend as required.

This will be the first year ATU will be monitored as a single body. The monitoring that took place in 2023 considered the three legacy institutions, and the EDI team made submissions to IHREC in February 2024 to provide relevant information not captured by the IHREC process.

IHREC recommend implementation of the Duty by incorporating responsibility for the Duty into existing cross-organisational structures such as the senior management team, forums involving heads of departments, or structures responsible for areas such as business planning or risk management, or building on the work of an existing committee, such as EDI Steering Group. However, IHREC also notes that in a larger organisation it may be useful to consider establishing a specific unit to support implementation. Donegal ETB recently published a helpful article setting out how they approached this work by first establishing a working group of senior management supported by Values Lab who undertook the initial assessment stage after which an implementation plan was produced.

ATU EDI Networks, Activities & Communications

The EDI Team supports a number of staff networks which aim to promote a more inclusive culture at ATU, and these are listed below. If you are interested in establishing an equality related network, please contact the EDI Team

LGBTQIA+ Staff & Allies Network
AURA is ATU's LGBTQIA+ staff and allies' network. Its mission is to champion equality for all LGBTQIA+ people in the university. Working with colleagues and departments throughout the university AURA members are committed to ensuring ATU continues to be a welcoming and inclusive community through regular initiatives, events and by contributing to governance structures and policy development.

Race Equality Network
ATU has signed up to the Higher Education Authority's Anti-Racism Principles for Higher Education Institutions embedding anti-racism into our institutional culture and strategic priorities. As part of this work a Race Equality Network has been established providing an inclusive and open space where the diversity of insight and experience of the membership informs and shapes the university's commitment to race equality.

Equality Champions Network
As committed to in the university's Gender Action Plan, an Equality Champions Network has been established with representation from across ATU providing on-the-ground support and advocacy for EDI initiatives including Athena Swan and the work of its Self-Assessment Team. The Gender Action Plan covers a three-year period with actions to promote equality, remove barriers to equality, and further develop a more inclusive workplace.

The EDI team have committed to undertake and/or support initiatives on the following International Days of Observation for the 2024/25 academic year in collaboration with relevant departments, colleagues and student representatives.

Black History Month	October 2024
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women & Girls & beginning of 16 Days Campaign (25 Nov)	25 November 2024
International Day of Persons with Disabilities	3 December 2024
World Human Rights Day	10 December 2024
LGBT+ History Month	February 2025
World Day of Social Justice	20 February 2025
Traveller Ethnicity Day	1 March 2025
International Women's Day	8 March 2025
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	21 March 2025
International Roma Day	8 April 2025
Pride/Bród 2024 Parades	June/July/Aug 2025
World Refugee Day 2024	20 June 2025

The EDI team uses a range of communication tools to engage with staff and students, and to disseminate relevant information throughout the university community, including training and signposting to relevant support. ATU's EDI platforms include LinkedIn, Instagram, Workvivo, SharePoint and a monthly all staff and student mailshot. EDI SharePoint information is also available to students through the three campus Student Hubs.

Appendix A – Outstanding Actions in Gender Action Plan

Outstanding Actions	Status
No 4 ATU SAT identifies departments and timeframes for submission of faculty/departmental STEMM & AHSSBL applications for Athena Swan Bronze.	Athena Swan Ireland has advised against progressing this action until new academic structure is in place
No 5 Establish departmental/faculty SATs to progress applications. Provide an appropriate hours allocation to support departmental applications	Athena Swan Ireland has advised against progressing this action until new academic structure is in place. The provision on an hours allocation is in question given the refusal of the Resourcing Committee to provide an allocation to the University Athena Swan Chair.
No 9 Initiate a campaign to capture and analyse a suite of equality data for all staff across all characteristics using an intersectional approach.	A proposal to tie this in with the launch of the new ATU wide CORE system was not progressed
No 14 Advertise appointments using diverse recruitment channels, including networks for underrepresented groups.	
No 17 Apply the flexible cascade model to the recruitment process for appointments at all grades.	
No 23 Provide a Management Handbook for all HoDs and HoFs.	
No 24 Initiate consultation on a Career Development Framework for academic and research staff and PMSS, to include PD planning and training for managers on how to support staff in their career development.	
No 25 Ensure training opportunities that are supported by the University are aligned to the Career Development Framework.	
No 26 Establish an academic promotion process subject to national agreements.	Lack of progress at a national level
No 39 Review workload allocation across the ATU.	
No 40 Integrate an Equality Impact Assessment into existing communications and marketing protocols	
No 41 Monitor Institute progress on representation of diverse role model visibility in all publicity material and report annually to EDI subcommittee of GB.	
No 42 Conduct an audit and analysis of leadership culture across the ATU (staff surveys; focus groups; metrics)	

Appendix B - Aurora Programme 2023/24 Review

Aurora Programme 2023/24
Review July 2024

The following is a short review of the Aurora 2023/24 programme administered and funded by the EDI team's budget at a total cost of €18,853.

Aurora, an annual programme run by AdvanceHE, is open to academic & PMSS staff who are not currently members of the university's senior management team to enable participants explore and develop leadership skills.

The programme is delivered primarily online and includes workshops on identity; impact and voice; power and politics; core leadership skills; adaptive leadership skills and optional networking sessions. The EDI team also arrange and pay for mentee training and facilitate mentoring for participants from the university's wider management team.

All higher education institutions have a statutory obligation to promote gender balance among staff and students. ATU is committed to advancing the Second HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions recommendations through the implementation of the university's Gender Action Plan and related human rights and equality initiatives.

ATU's Gender Action Plan commits to support, and fund continued participation in the Aurora programme annually, with funding available for a minimum of twelve female staff.

On completion of the programme the President hosted a certificate presentation event on the Sligo campus at the end of May attended by 2022/23 and 2023/24 programme participants.
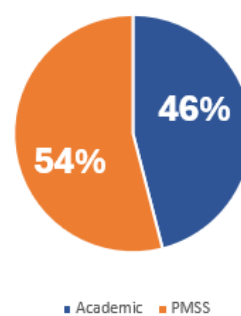
Selection criteria
An expression of interest (EOI) for the programme was opened to all staff in September 2023 via email and the team received 46 applications for which funding for 15 women was available.

As one applicant withdrew her EOI after registration the payment for this place has been carried over to the 2024/25 programme.

Aurora Programme 2023/24 EOIs by campus

Sligo 53% · Galway 18% · Mayo 13% · Donegal 16%
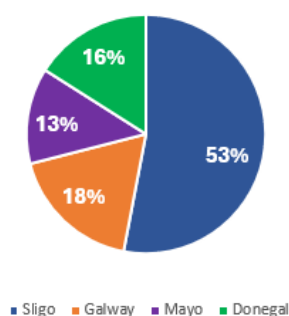
Aurora Programme 2023/24 EOIs by staff type

Academic 46% · PMSS 54%

Applicants answered four weighted questions, see below.

Questions	Selection criteria
Why do you wish to participate in the Aurora Programme? *(max 10 points)*	✓ Addresses the relevance / appeal of the programme ✓ Addresses the timing of this programme relative to career plan etc ✓ Sets out rationale for wanting to develop leadership skills to enhance career
How will participation in this programme benefit your personal and professional development? *(max 10 points)*	✓ Show consideration of the modules & content of prog. & how it will specifically benefit the individual ✓ Evidence of career planning, tied to PMDS
How will participation in this programme benefit your department and the wider institution? *(max 10 points)*	✓ Develop a leadership skill set which can contribute to the leadership or department ✓ Develop the succession pipeline in a way that will serve to address under representation of women at senior levels ✓ Promote the application of AS principles ✓ Able to contribute to wider institution ✓ goals
Give an example of when you showed leadership within your area of work & briefly describe the impact and outcome of the initiative? *(max 10 points)*	✓ Provide tangible leadership example ✓ Describe own actions and outcomes ✓ Evidence of reflection / self-analysis

Aurora Programme 2023/24 Costs

Item	Cost
15 places on the 2023/24 programme	€17,598
Mentee training for all participants	€800
Mentor training	€180
Photography for Aurora certificates presentation event	€135
Hospitality for Aurora certificates presentation event	€140
TOTAL	€18,853

Project feedback

An online survey was completed by 13 of the 14 participants in June/July 2024, a summary of responses is outlined below.

Twelve of the thirteen Aurora 2023/24 survey respondents would recommend the Aurora programme to a colleague.

Seven of the thirteen respondents attended all eight workshops including the in-person **Your Future in HE** event held in Dublin. Five respondents did not attend the **Action Learning Set 2** delegate's self-host workshop.

Ten respondents agreed the programme addressed their **current leadership challenges/needs**, two disagreed and one in some respects but not entirely.

When asked how useful the programme was in developing their **core leadership skills***, nine respondents said extremely useful, three somewhat useful and one was neutral.

When asked how useful the programme was in developing their **adaptive leadership skills***, five said extremely useful, six somewhat useful and two were neutral.

When asked how useful the programme was in **increasing confidence to pursue professional leadership goals and opportunities***, four found it extremely useful, 8 found it somewhat useful and one was neutral.

Ten participants are **more likely to avail of professional networking opportunities** after completing the programme.

* Respondents were also offered a response of somewhat not useful and extremely not useful to these questions. None selected these responses.

Additional feedback from the 2023/24 programme participants

"This programme encouraged me to do a lot of self-reflection sometimes uncomfortable but a lot more Aha moments. I have realised a few things and understand what I want."

"The programme itself provided insight, strategies, support, empowerment, opportunities for multi-faceted growth and awareness of how well we are actually doing navigating a system that was not constructed to suit our needs."

I suggest ATU hold more face-to-face sessions with their staff, across all campuses. We don't know each other, and there are fantastic networking and future work opportunities to be taken advantage of by doing this. For Aurora, there should also be a big face-to-face session at the start. The Croke Park day was by far the best one."

"I learned a lot from it and enjoyed meeting others and sharing experiences with them. Being able to access the resources in the future will also be beneficial as they will provide support as and when new experiences or opportunities arise. Thanks to all involved."

"I found the programme really enlightening as it allowed me the space to tune in to what my career progression in the HE sector could be . I have developed a growth mindset and am now more likely to seek out connections and opportunities both professionally and personally."

Conclusion

Expressions of interest in the Aurora 2024/25 programme will open to ATU staff in early September through an open competitive call. Full details will be circulated by email and will be promoted through the EDI SharePoint and Workvivo. The EDI team's ability to fund the minimum Gender Action Plan commitment for the 2024/25 programme will be dependent on the team's budget allocation.

Appendix C - Pilot EDI Activity Support Fund 2023/24 Review

The following is a short review of the EDI Activity Support Fund pilot project initiated in late 2023 by the EDI team.

The pilot was funded by the EDI team's budget and its stated purpose was to further the mainstreaming of EDI throughout the university community by providing financial support to relevant innovative projects or initiatives that without the necessary funding, would not in part or full be realised.

The pilot was opened to all staff and students via email on the 27th of October 2023 with a short deadline due to end of year spending requirements. Minimum and maximum funding of €500 to €3,000 were noted in the documentation.

Priority themes

- Race Equality in Higher Education - Projects which support and raise awareness of race equality in ATU, from either a staff or student perspective.

- Collaboration & Inclusion - Projects which promote greater collaborations across campuses of ATU and contribute to an inclusive, welcoming culture in the university.

Key dates for applicants

27 Oct 2023	Fund opens
10 Nov 2023 (12 noon)	Deadline for applications to edi@atu.ie
17 Nov 2023	Successful applicants informed by email
1 Dec 2023	All quotes and supporting document submitted by successful applicants

Documents provided to all staff and students and appended to this report

- Application Form
- Fund Details / Terms of Reference
- Fund Procedure

Selection criteria

a) relevance to the selected theme/s on EDI ground/s (20%)
b) expected benefit (impact) for Atlantic Technological University (40%)
c) expected benefit (impact) for wider society (10%)
d) originality and creative approach (10%)
e) value for money (20%)

Thirty-six applications were received from academic staff, PMSS staff,and students. A subcommittee of ATU's EDI Steering Group was convened to select the successful applicants of which there were eight, with seven from academic staff and one from PMSS. Funds awarded to successful applicants were administered by the EDI Team Administrator, with procurement and communications support provided to all successful applicants throughout the duration of their projects. Feedback was provided to the unsuccessful applicants on request.

Applications (successful applications highlighted in blue)

Staff/Student	Project title	Dept/s
Staff	Shared Wellbeing Space Sligo	Healthy Campus Disability Office
Staff	Addressing Race in Counselling Training	Social Sciences
Student	The New Irish Podcast	
Staff	Poetic Justice Poetry Competition - a global identity for a time of global challenge	Early Education and Social Studies
Staff	EDI Book Display Unit	Sligo Library
Staff	Women in Sport and Exercise Science Community of Practice Event	Tourism and Sport
Staff	Assistive Technology for Examinations	Student Services
Staff	A photography/Sketching competition on the theme of "the experiences of LGBT+ students in ATU"	Computing
Staff	Accessible Adventures Outdoors - Video Resource	Business Studies
Staff	Inclusive library seating	Sligo Library
Staff	Building Connections between Women Studying in the Engineering School	Electronic Engineering
Research student	The ATU Ecosystem	Physics Education Research
Staff	ATU LC Maths Grinds	Academic Affairs
Staff	Civic Engagement outreach in Engineering	Electronic Engineering
Staff	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Sociology and Politics	Social Sciences

Staff	Participation in ATU: insights from learners from the Traveller Community	Health Science Nursing
Staff	Artworks for all	Academic Affairs
Staff	Audio & Visual Guides for students on how to complete relevant processes	Academic Affairs
Staff	Practical Accommodation	Academic Affairs
Staff	Race Equality Network welcome video on racial equality to be used as a teaching object for first year students in all disciplines and campuses to help create a welcoming, inclusive space in the ATU.	Adult Education
Staff	Bridging the gap between cultural diversity and health	Sports Exercise & Nutrition
Staff	Creating a Calming Space for Neurodivergent and Mental Health Students	Access
Staff	Intergenerational Awareness Week 2024	Social Sciences
Staff	Collaborating to end sexual violence in ATU	SV&HP
Staff	Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (WiSTEM)	
Staff	Inclusive library seating	Sligo Library
Staff	Multi-languages, multi-cultures and multi-identities in the ATU Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) program	Health Science Nursing
Staff	Promoting Gender Diversity in STEM: A Workshop and Think Tank Initiative	Industrial & Mechanical Engineering
Staff	Creative Communication of Mentoring Messages	Student Services
Staff	Auditing project-based learning in a multicultural student group as a pedagogy of inclusive teaching	Life Sciences
Staff	Generative AI through an EDI lens: how to identify and manage bias in the use of AI tools across the ATU community	Humanities
Student	Drama for All!	
Staff	Traveller Ethnicity Day Primary Schools Competition	Registrar
Staff	Roma International Day	Registrar
Staff	Traveller and Roma video	Registrar
Staff	The lived experience of a disability activist	Environmental Science

Costs

The team allocated €18,000 from the EDI budget to the Fund, awarded €17,140 to the successful applicants and the final cost of all eight projects is €19,398.

Project feedback

An online survey was completed by seven of the eight project leads in June 2024, a summary of responses is outlined below.

- Approx. 217 students engaged directly with the projects throughout their development
- Approx. 54 staff engaged directly with the projects throughout their development
- Direct campus engagement with the projects was highest in Sligo, Galway city, Castlebar & Letterkenny (in this order)
- Direct campus engagement with the projects was lowest in Killybegs, St. Angelas, Mountbellew and Wellpark (in this order)
- Leads have delivered all aspects of their projects as set out in their application form and that their project will deliver the expected benefit and impact
- Five leads confirmed they would consider applying to the EDI Activity Support Fund in the future
- Three leads found the procurement requirements of the fund challenging , one noted challenges in co-ordinating multiple campus collaboration and two additional workload
- Four of the projects have been completed, one is complete and will launched at the start of the 2024/25 academic year, and the remaining three will be completed by early August again for roll out at the start of the new academic year

Projects reach

The accessible outdoors adventures video project will have a significant and ongoing reach to all outdoor and environmental education students and the broader adventure sport community. Similarly, the race equality video is a reusable teaching tool for first year students in all disciplines and campuses. The audio-visual guides will be available to all students on-site and online.

The report on learners from the Traveller Community insights will provide ongoing support to future Traveller participation in ATU programmes, and the Intergenerational Week of events will play an important role in ATU's Age Friendly University application in addition to its reach to a number of external community based voluntary and statutory organisations.

Five of the projects include several events open to staff and students on four of the university's campuses - Letterkenny, Galway, Mayo, and Sligo.

Conclusion

As the pilot project has successfully met its objective the team recommend that the Fund be reopened early in the 2024/25 academic year with minor changes to the application form and supporting document, and possibly with a reduced allocation due to budgetary constraints.

Completed by Sinéad Ní Bhroin
EDI Team Administrator
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