



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

ATU Similar Access Policy

Access to sport, physical activity and facilities

November 2025

Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Donegal

Similar Access to Sport and Physical Activity Policy

Revision

Date of this revision	28/11/25
Date of next review	27/11/26
Version number	1
Summary of changes	New Similar Access to Sport & Physical Activity Policy (ATU)

Consultation

Dates	1.) May-June 2024 2.) November 27-28 2025
Parties in consultation	Head of Sport, ATU Donegal Sport Centre Manager, ATU Donegal Student Services Manager ATU EDI Office ATU Donegal Students Union ATU Access & Widening Participation Officer

Approval

Version	2
Approved by	Head of Sport, ATU Donegal. Sport Centre Manager, ATU Donegal. Student Services Manager, ATU Donegal.
Date	28/11/25

Document Location

ATU Donegal Sports Centre Website
[Similar Access to Sport and Recreation Policy - Atlantic Technological University](#)

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1.Introduction

As with the National Sports Policy 2018-2027, the core value of Atlantic Technological University (ATU) is sport for all, to welcome and promote inclusion and participation for everyone, without exclusion. This includes students, staff, the wider community, of all abilities and under-represented groups within and outside the university. This core value is reflected in the Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award, awarded to ATU Donegal in 2022, in recognition of its work in advancing gender equality and in promoting diversity and inclusion for staff and students. The silver award is being pursued for 2025. ATU Sport seeks to embed these values together with the following principles:

- Offer appropriate (similar or equal) opportunities for participation, social or active, and improvement to all.
- Retain a focus on addressing social, disability, gender, ethnic and age gradients in sport and recreation.
- Centre the needs and rights of those at risk of marginalisation.
- Foster a sense of belonging by offering and promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.

2. Policy Context

The core value of inclusion permeates the National Sports Policy 2018-2027, a value which is the guiding principle of Sport Ireland's Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Policy, 2021.

These policies address the significant and persistent lower active participation levels in sport among lower socio-economic groups, people with a disability, ethnic minority groups and girls and women. It is recognised that lower levels of participation are not through choice but are a legacy of years of a long-standing status quo that is contrary to contemporary society. Narrowing the participation gradients is a priority.

To this end, provided for under The National Sports Policy 2018-2027, the Large-Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) Similar Access Requirements are addressed in this policy.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is twofold:

- a) To commit to provide similar access to facilities for both women and men, in respect of usage times, training and match grounds, changing facilities and common spaces, as well as to under-represented groups, in accordance with the Large-Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) Similar Access Requirement.
- b) To create awareness of the issue of lower participation gradients among underrepresented groups and to act, encourage and stimulate others, to reduce it.

4. Objectives

- a) To increase active participation in sport and physical activity, to the broadest range of users, in the Northwest region and beyond.
- c) To reduce the active participant gradient between genders and underrepresented groups.
- b) To ensure participation is open, equitable and accessible to all, without discrimination.

5. Outcome

- a) To have reduced the social, gender, disability, ethnic and age gradient in sport and physical activity year on year.
- b) To have ongoing equitable and similar access to all users of the ATU sports facilities.
- c) To stimulate more sustained active participation in sport at all life stages.
- d) Significant reductions in the active participation gradients by socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, age and gender
- e) Greater levels of social participation in sport across the population.

6. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All publicly funded sport and recreation facilities and services, provided by ATU and its sponsor, and by those who use the facilities, and includes training, games/matches, optimal facility times, communal areas, and changing rooms.
- All parties external to ATU, community, club, schools or individuals, who may operate within or visit an ATU campus.
- The general public.
- All units of Sport in ATU including sports staff and sports management, the sports courses academic unit, all students, all sport centre members, professional, technical and other service units.
- All officers of the Student Union.
- All ATU employees.

7. Principles

- a) ATU and Donegal County Council will ensure that women and men and under-represented groups have similar access to facilities, including optimal facility times for training and matches, as well as similar access to communal spaces and changing room facilities.
- b) ATU will encourage and support the full participation of women and men and under-represented groups in all aspects of its organisation, including as players, social and active participants, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteers, and spectators.

- c) ATU will ensure that women, men and under-represented groups have similar access to, and use of, its sports infrastructure.
- d) ATU will maintain and promote gender balance in its leadership and governance roles, continuously aiming for representation in line with government policy at board level. ATU's Licence Agreement partners and Memoranda of Agreement holders will have gender balance at the board/committee level and will provide evidence of such before entering into an agreement with ATU.
- e) ATU will request and check that all National Governing Bodies of Sport whose clubs or users use the facilities comply with the 40% gender balance target for its management board. Written evidence will be required. If not, usage is not permitted until the balance is achieved and maintained.
- f) ATU will encourage and support all user groups who access and use ATU facilities to understand, adopt, the similar access policy and implement their own similar access policies.
- g) ATU will prioritise and support user groups that demonstrate an ongoing commitment to implementing similar access policies.

8.Implementation

ATU will take necessary and proportionate steps to implement this Policy by:

- a) Accessible design: The design of the proposed new facilities, including the changing rooms, have fully considered equality of access and various user needs. For example, changing rooms will not be allocated a gender status, showers will be booths rather than communal showers to allow maximum flexibility for all male events, all female events or a mix of male and female teams/individuals on any given day. In addition, 2x referee changing rooms have been designed as mini versions of the larger changing rooms, this will provide an additional gender-neutral facility for visitors of the site to avail of where circumstances require it. The design is physically accessible for all abilities.
- b) Referencing this policy and encouraging the implementation of similar access policies, in all formally signed Licence Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and any Agreements with community groups and clubs.
- c) ATU will ensure that this policy is adopted by Donegal County Council, the co-applicant of ATU's LSSIF application (see Appendix 2), by Donegal Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) by Cricket Ireland, both priority partners and supporters in ATU's LSSIF application.
- c) The proposed facilities will become a home ground for Donegal Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA), a priority partner and Licence Agreement holder in the LSSIF application.
- d) All Licence Agreement holders agree to adopt this policy on officially signing the formal agreement.
- e) The NGBs of all clubs will be required to produce evidence of compliance with the 40% gender balance at committee or board level before using the sports facilities.
- f) ATU has published this Similar Access policy on its Sports Centre webpage.

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- g) The policy will be updated annually, and necessary amendments made, to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
- h) ATU Sport will report on its progress and actions related to similar access goals and targets in its annual report and on social media twice yearly (see appendix 1).
- i) ATU's Interim Code of Governance (2022), confirms the University's commitment to complying with Equal Status legislation.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Head of Sport at ATU Donegal, the Manager of the LSRAH, reporting to the ATU LSRAH committee (to be comprised of ATU and community members), will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the above, with necessary amendments made, to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

10. External Reference Documents

The principle regulatory and legislative documents informing this policy include:

- LSSIF Similar Access Requirement, May 2024.
- ATU Universal Design & Accessibility Policy, Version 1.0 (Draft, Nov 2023)
- ATU's Interim Code of Governance, V1, (2022),
- Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Policy Document, Sport Ireland, 2021.
- National Sports Policy 2018-2027
- Sports Action Plan, Sport Ireland, 2021-2023
- National Physical Activity Plan, 2016 (updated in 2022)
- Irish Sports Monitor 2021
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2018
- The 20x20 Women in Sport Campaign, 2019-2020.

11. Contact

Questions or concerns regarding this Similar Access Policy can be directed to:

Michael Murphy, Head of Sport, ATU Donegal

Helen Kennedy, Sports Centre Manager, ATU Donegal

Email: sportscentre.donegal@atu.ie

Tel: 074 9186800 / 9186868.

Signed



Date: 27/11/25

Appendix 1, Usage Report

ATU Sports Service - Annual Report

Similar Access Data - Letterkenny Sport and Recreation Activity Hub							
ATU sports teams have xxx members of which xx are female and xxx are male							
ATU will realise/maintain similar access by its own teams and clubs by 2027 (when the LRSAH facilities are built/open)							
ATU commits to monitoring similar access by clubs/organisations, aiming for 10% each year until achieved. To be achieved by 2030							
Year:	Females: <i>(tick one)</i>	Males: <i>(tick one)</i>					
Month	% of female use	% of male use	Best training time	Best game time	Usage of optimal facility times	Usage outside of best training, game and optimal facility times: % of female usage	Usage outside of best training, game and optimal facility times: % of male usage
Jan							
Feb							
March							
April							
May							
June							
July							
August							
Sept							
Oct							
Nov							
Dec							

Appendix 2. Sponsor Support



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

www.ccdhunnangall.ie www.donegalcoco.ie

Mr. Henry McGarvey,
VP Corporate Services.
ATU – Donegal,
Port Road
Letterkenny,
County Donegal.

BY EMAIL

28th June, 2024

Re: Letterkenny Regional Sports Activity Hub

Dear Mr. McGarvey,

I write to confirm that Donegal County Council supports ATU's Similar Access Policy, dated June 2024, in respect of facility usage at the proposed development, Letterkenny Regional Sports Activity Hub.

Donegal County Council also confirms that it supports the objective of achieving 40% female representation at board level.

Yours sincerely,

Liam Ward.

Liam Ward
Director of Community Development and Planning Services,
Donegal County Council.

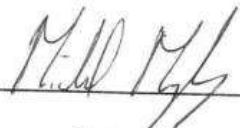


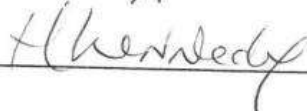
Appendix 3. Similar Access Policy Commitment

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) undertakes that it will provide similar access to women and men to its facilities, particularly those facilities which are the beneficiary of Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Funding (LSSIF).

ATU Sport and Donegal County Council will undertake the necessary and proportionate steps towards implementation of a Similar Access Policy by ensuring that:

- a) that women and men and under-represented groups have similar access to facilities, including best/optimal facility times for training and matches, as well as similar access to communal spaces and changing room facilities.
- b) the full participation of women and men and under-represented groups will be encouraged and supported in all aspects of its organisation, including as players, social and active participants, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteers, and spectators.
- c) women, men and under-represented groups have similar access to, and use of, its sports infrastructure.
- d) gender balance will be maintained and promoted in its leadership and governance roles, continuously aiming for representation in line with government policy at board level. ATU's Licence Agreement partners and Memoranda of Agreement holders will have gender balance at the board/committee level and will provide evidence of such before entering into an agreement with ATU.
- e) all National Governing Bodies of Sport whose clubs or users use the facilities comply with the 40% gender balance target for its management board. Written evidence will be required. If not, usage is not permitted until the balance is achieved and maintained.
- f) ATU will encourage and support all user groups who access and use the LSSIF funded facilities to understand and adopt this similar access policy and implement their own similar access policies.
- g) ATU will prioritise and support user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to implementing similar access policies.
- h) this Similar Access policy is published on its Sports Centre webpage and will publish it on the ATU website when ratified at University Planning Team (UPT level, Spring-Summer 2025).
- i) The policy will be updated annually, and necessary amendments made, to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
- j) progress reports and actions related to similar access goals and targets are included in our annual report and on social media twice yearly.
- k) ATU's Interim Code of Governance (2022), confirms the University's (ATU) commitment to complying with Equal Status legislation.

Signed:  Date: 11/7/24

Witness:  Date: 11/7/24