



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

**Access and
Widening
Participation**

ATU Traveller and Roma Framework

**SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL
PROGRESSION FOR MEMBERS of
TRAVELLER and
ROMA COMMUNITIES**

June 2026



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
List of Figures.....	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Overview of Traveller and Roma communities within this region	7
2.1 General context	7
2.2 Traveller Community	7
2.3 Roma Community	10
3. Traveller and Roma communities: ATU obligations and commitments	12
3.1 Legal requirements	12
3.2 National Policy Influences	13
3.3 Funding commitments	15
3.4 Wider institutional, regional, national, European and international commitments	17
4. ATU's Response and Rationale	19
4.1 Governance and Oversight.....	20
4.2 Initiatives and developments (2022-2026)	22
4.3 Proposed work (2026-2030)	23
5. Priority actions (informed by Government policies, Traveller and Roma-led reports, key institutional policies and stakeholder meetings)	24
5.1 NAP (2022-2028)	24
5.2 TRES (2024-2030)	24
5.3 NTRIS (2024-2028),	24
5.4 Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty	24
5.5 <i>Hand the Shame Back: A Qualitative Study of Traveller Experiences Across the Education Continuum – Enabling a University for All</i> (UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, 2023).	25
5.6 The Traveller Graduate Network: A formative evaluation of a new initiative to support Travellers in education (SOAR, 2021)	25
5.7 Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education (2019-2021).....	26
5.8 Travellers in Higher Education Project: An Overview 2021-2023 (ATU, 2023).	26
5.9 Report on the Special Purpose Award in Community Development Practice (ATU, 2024).	27
5.10 Understanding Attitudes to Travellers and Roma in Ireland, ESRI, 2024	28
5.11 Barriers to Higher Education for the Roma Community in Ireland	28
5.12 National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR) 2023–2027.....	29
5.13 ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028)	29
5.14 DEIS Strategy and DEIS Plus Scheme and Implementation Plan	30
6. Programme of work: Summary (2022-2030)	32

7. Reporting, evaluation and resourcing	33
7.1 Reporting.....	33
7.2 Evaluation	33
7.3 Resourcing	34
8. Summary	35
9. List of Abbreviations.....	36
10. References.....	37
Appendix 1 – ATU Traveller & Roma Framework – Action Plan	40
Appendix 2 – Rationale for Actions aligned to reported recommendations/required actions	45

List of Figures

Fig 1: Census 2022 returns indicating numbers of Travellers in ATU's Tertiary Education Cluster (Donegal ETB, GRETB, MSLETB)/WNW Cluster

Fig 2: Introduction to Community Development Practice Group (ATU Mayo): customised programme based on needs of Traveller community, January-May 2024

Fig. 3: Roma Health Project Team NW attending first combined Traveller-Roma Exhibition at ATU Donegal as part of EU Belong-One Donegal Social Inclusion Week, March 2024

Fig. 4: ATU-Donegal Traveller Project Joint Display at EDI Week, ATU Donegal (February 2024)

Fig.5: HEA PATH 5 funded Afterschool Programme. Taster sessions (Science) at ATU Donegal, March -April 2024

Fig6: HEA PATH 5 funded Afterschool Programme. Taster sessions (Sports) at ATU Donegal, March -April 2024

Fig 7: Influences in shaping ATU's long-term approach to Traveller and Roma Education

Fig. 8: ATU St. Angela's Library Display in celebration of Traveller Ethnicity Day (1 March 2024)

Fig 9: ATU's long-term approach to Traveller and Roma Education

Fig.10: ATU Traveller and Roma Framework, sample activities 2022-2025

Fig. 11: Five Key Themes in delivery of ATU Traveller and Roma Education

Fig. 12: First combined Traveller-Roma Exhibition at ATU Donegal as part of EU Belong-One Donegal Social Inclusion Week, March 2024

Fig. 13: *Pavee Beoirs Whiden'* (Traveller Women Talking): creative arts project presented by ATU Access and Widening Participation Service in March 2024 to mark International Women's Day. This was the very first Traveller exhibition at ATU Donegal.

Fig. 14: Talk on Traveller History and Culture at ATU Galway in celebration of Traveller Ethnicity Day (1 March 2024)

Fig. 15: Selection of staff members from ATU's Access and Widening Participation Service and Student Services who took part in Traveller and Roma Cultural Competency in Higher Education Training as part of Traveller Pride Week (May 2024)

Fig 16: HEA PATH 5 funded Afterschool Programme. Taster sessions (Design) at ATU Donegal, March -April 2024

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right, recognised internationally as essential to the full development of individuals and the realisation of all other rights. It provides people with knowledge, skills and confidence which greatly enhances their ability to participate fully in society, access employment, and make informed decisions about their lives. As a human right, education must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all, without discrimination. Ensuring equitable access to quality education is particularly important for Traveller and Roma communities who have historically experienced exclusion and marginalisation, as it plays a critical role in addressing inequality, promoting social justice, and enabling individuals and communities to thrive.

As one of the largest education providers in Ireland, Atlantic Technological University ATU has legal obligations under the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Act (2022) and the Technological Universities Act 2018 to provide increased access to university education for those “who are significantly under-represented in its student body” (2018, Section 9 (l)). ATU also has sectoral, moral, and ethical responsibilities in providing equitable access to higher education for all, including Traveller and Roma communities in line with our mission and values.

The HEA, Government Departments and other State agencies require ATU to employ significant efforts in supporting Traveller and Roma communities into higher education, as well as supporting increased levels of retention, attainment and progression into postgraduate education and employment. The current National Access Plan (NAP) (2022-2028) which directs much ATU’s work with underrepresented communities, for example, specifies Traveller and Roma communities as one of three priority groups. To fulfil its responsibilities and commitments, ATU collaborates closely with other education providers, Traveller and Roma advocacy organisations, and key stakeholders at both national and regional levels.

The establishment of ATU in 2022 increased awareness around the availability and accessibility of university education to Traveller and Roma communities across the region. The timeframe coincided with the HEA’s *Programme for Access to Higher Education* (PATH) 3 and PATH 5 funding (2023-2025), aimed at increasing support for the Traveller and Roma communities in higher education. ATU secured PATH 3 funding and committed to the development of a model or framework to support increased access, progression, retention and success in higher education by members of the Traveller and Roma communities in the West-Northwest (WNW) region.

An initial draft Framework was endorsed by ATU senior management in April 2025. Following an information-sharing briefing in October 2025, which included region-wide external stakeholders, it was recommended that the Framework and its associated

actions be reviewed to allow for greater input from these stakeholders. Subsequently, a reconstituted Traveller and Roma Advisory Group, incorporating increased external representation, undertook a revision of the Framework and its actions. This process resulted in a more comprehensive and cohesive approach, reflecting both stakeholder input and relevant ATU policy developments since the initial draft, including the revised Traveller and Roma Advisory Group Terms of Reference (2026) and ATU's Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan, launched in 2026. It also acknowledges external policy developments such as the publication by the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) of the DEIS Strategy to 2035 and new DEIS Plus scheme in 2026.

ATU Traveller and Roma Framework (2022-2030) sets out a collaborative approach, involving other education providers, Traveller and Roma advocacy groups, ATU staff and students in supporting two of the most marginalised ethnic minority groups in Ireland, who continue to experience discrimination across many areas of society, including education. The Framework outlines targeted actions aimed at promoting equitable access, participation, and outcomes for Traveller and Roma communities. This work involves a range of provisions, including customised information and engagement at pre-entry stage and ongoing engagement throughout a student's study cycle, with one-to-one mentoring or signposting to other University services.

ATU's Framework for Traveller and Roma Education aims to provide:

- Overview of Traveller and Roma communities within this region
- Traveller and Roma communities: ATU obligations and commitments
- ATU's response and rationale
- Priority actions
- Programme of work: (Summary 2022-2030)
- Reporting, evaluation and resourcing
- Summary

2. Overview of Traveller and Roma communities within this region

2.1 General context

ATU is a multicampus Technological University, with a geographical spread comprising of 36.2% of the natural landmass in Ireland and home to 18% of the national population. The breadth and nature of the WNW region in terms of the combination of urban and rural expanses, infrastructural deficits such as transport and housing, proximity to the border with Northern Ireland and its impact on the development of the region, amongst other challenges, provide ATU with a unique set of tasks in the provision of university education. It is important to acknowledge the additional burden faced by Travellers and Roma communities within this region in comparison with areas which have greater infrastructural advantages and access to better resources.

While ATU attracts students from Traveller and Roma communities from across the country and from overseas, its commitment under NAP (2022-2028) primarily focuses on Traveller and Roma communities within the Tertiary Education Cluster encompassing Donegal ETB, Galway-Roscommon ETB (GRETB) and Mayo-Sligo-Leitrim ETB (MSLETB). This area also provides for the WNW Connect Cluster (ATU and University of Galway) and includes seven local authorities. It is anticipated that future iterations (post 2030) of the Framework will also include Cavan-Monaghan ETB.

It is broadly acknowledged that Traveller and Roma are two distinct communities and are grouped together in terms of national policy areas due to the nomadic nature of their respective culture. The Economic and Research Institute (ESRI) (2024) also references similarities in that both communities are “marginalised in Irish society: experiencing discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage” (ESRI, p. v). While similarities exist in relation to challenges experienced by Travellers and Roma in education, it is also true to say that each community have distinct issues and challenges and that within communities and locations distinct needs are also evident. There is significant diversity in the individual circumstances of people within Traveller and Roma communities. It is, therefore, important that ATU engages closely with these communities and provides customised supports and services, meeting the needs of individuals and groups as required as part of what Friel (2023) refers to as a “multi-dimensional approach” (2023, p. 9).

2.2 Traveller Community

The Traveller community was formally recognised by the Irish State as a distinct ethnic group in March 2017. Current data from Census 2022 suggests that the region is home to almost 7,400 or over 22% of the national Traveller population. This figure is considered by

many to be conservative as many from the Traveller community are reluctant to identify as Travellers due to high levels of discrimination and racism experienced by them. The All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (UCD, 2010) placed national population of Traveller community in the Republic of Ireland at 36, 244 in 2010.

Central Statistics Office (Census 2022 Returns)	
Administrative Counties (Tertiary Education/ETB Cluster)	No.
Donegal County Council (Donegal ETB)	670
Galway County Council (GRETb)	2,509
Galway City Council (GRETb)	1,748
Leitrim County Council (MSLETB)	180
Mayo County Council (MSLETB)	1,294
Roscommon County Council (GRETb)	565
Sligo County Council (MSLETB)	418
Estimated total Travellers in WNW region, 2022	7,384 (22.4% of Travellers nationally)
Estimated no. of Travellers in WNW region under 15 years of age (avg 36%)	2,658

Fig 1: Census 2022 returns indicating numbers of Travellers in ATU's Tertiary Education Cluster (Donegal ETB, GRETb, MSLETB)/WNW Cluster

Educational outcomes for Travellers are very poor by any comparison with the rest of the population. The Traveller Graduate Network (TGN) (2021) indicates several reasons for this including racism, bullying, lack of a sense of belonging, low teacher expectations and low parental expectations. In 2023, UCD commissioned a study into Traveller community experiences of further and higher education. In *Hand the Shame Back: A Qualitative Study of Traveller Experiences Across the Education Continuum - Enabling a University for All*, McGinley references a lack of intergenerational educational capital, an innate understanding of systems and processes in education which marginalised communities find themselves excluded or on the periphery. McGinley also references a “model of segregated education” (UCD, 2023, p. 10) which may influence the choices available to Traveller children with a suggestion that “a substantial proportion of Travellers still attend designated Special Schools” (2023, p. 11). Donegal Travellers Project (DTP) estimate that approximately 50% of the community experience low levels of literacy (DTP, 2024) which impacts progression rates to higher education. While the numbers of children from the Traveller community progressing from primary school to post-primary and completing Junior Cycle examination have increased in the last ten years, significant challenges remain. The rate of completion of the Leaving Certificate for the Traveller community, for instance, remains low at 31.4% in comparison with 91.7% of the total population (DES, 2024). This in turn impacts rates of progression into further and higher education with

4.7% of students from Traveller community completing higher education in comparison with 47.7% of the general population.

There are also, however, significant indications of positive developments. In 2023, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), published Traveller Culture and History: Research Report aimed at providing educators and other practitioners with information to support greater intercultural awareness in educational settings and the inclusion of Traveller history and culture in the curriculum. There is an increasing acknowledgement of a “need for dedicated Traveller adult education spaces within the Irish education system” (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010, p. 4) alongside customised supports providing information, guidance and mentoring within the wider education network. Numbers from the Traveller community nationally with a third level qualification has increased from 89 in Census 2011 to 312 in Census 2022. ATU is ahead of national average of new entrants from the Traveller community attracting Traveller participation levels of 0.2% of new entrants (2023/24). As with population numbers, data pertaining to students from the Traveller community in higher education are based on information where students from the Traveller community self-identify and, therefore, may not adequately capture all students from this community.



Fig 2: *Introduction to Community Development Practice (ATU Mayo): customised programme based on needs of Traveller community, January-May 2024*

2.3 Roma Community

National data indicates that the Roma population nationally stands at 16,059. Census 2022 suggests that there are 2,629 from the Roma community in primary school and 775 in post-primary schools. Statistical Spotlight: Roma in Ireland (DCEDIY, 2025) provides insights into Roma population trends across the country. Other regional reports offer additional insights. Galway-Roscommon Education and Training Board's (GRETb) (2021), *Call for Service, County Roscommon Thematic Roma Project*, for example, indicates that there are a minimum of 36 Roma households living in Roscommon Town with at least 165 individuals, 85+ of whom are aged between 10 and 24 years. Similarly, the same study identified 15 Roma households/family groups living in Ballaghaderreen with 62 individuals, almost forty of whom were under 24 years of age.



Fig. 3: Roma Health Project Team NW attending first combined Traveller-Roma Exhibition at ATU Donegal as part of EU Belong-One Donegal Social Inclusion Week, March 2024

Roma communities are a “culturally distinct group” (ESRI, 2024, p. 1) but also diverse and as stated by ESRI (2024) “vary widely in terms of religion, languages and way of living” (2024, p. 1) and experience “extreme disadvantage” (2024, p. 1) in Ireland. Historically, the Roma community has experienced challenges with the education system. The Roma Needs Assessment (2018) references language barriers, the lack of Roma culture and history in the curriculum, poverty and poor living conditions, “identity-based bullying” (2018, p. 117) leading to a desire to hide one’s identity and low levels of parental experiences in formal education are also referenced.

More detailed information on Traveller and Roma communities is available from the Department of Education's, *Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (2024-2030)*, the *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (2024-2028)* (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), 2024), *Traveller Culture and History: Research Report* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), 2023) and a recent report *Understanding Attitudes to Travellers and Roma in Ireland* (Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), 2024).



Fig. 4: ATU-Donagel Traveller Project Joint Display at EDI Week, ATU Donagel (February 2024)

3. Traveller and Roma communities: ATU obligations and commitments

3.1 Legal requirements

The HEA Act, 2022 references provision for underrepresented groups in higher education, particularly in Part 5: Access, Participation and Lifelong Learning.

The Technological Universities Act 2018 sets out a number of requirements of ATU which are relevant to Traveller and Roma communities. Section 9 and Section 9 (l), in particular, requires ATU to

promote access to the technological university and the education it provides, by economically or socially disadvantaged persons, by persons who have a disability and by persons from sections of society in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located who are significantly under-represented in its student body. (2018, p. 16)

Traveller and Roma communities are the most disadvantaged communities in this region. Although ATU's participation levels of 0.2% of new entrants (2023/24) are comparatively high nationally, students from the Traveller community have the lowest representation in higher education of all marginalised groups and the highest unemployment rates nationally (61% in Census 2022 in comparison with 4.34% within the general population). *Roma in Ireland: A National Needs Assessment* (Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre & Department of Justice and Equality, 2018) indicated that 83.3% of Roma were unemployed at the time of the research. Economic surveys published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have long since highlighted Ireland's slow progress in supporting those who are in long-term unemployment. In 2022 the OECD stated that Ireland's "labour force participation is still weak for those with lower education attainment" (OECD, 2022, p. 16). More recently, in *OECD Skills Strategy Ireland: Assessment and Recommendations*, the OECD called on Ireland to provide for "tailored and targeted support to disadvantaged groups to address the specific barriers they face to participating in lifelong learning" (OECD, 2023, p. 32)

Traveller and Roma communities are represented amongst the unemployed and those with lower education attainment more than any other group. It can, therefore, be concluded that, under the Technological Universities Act (2018), ATU is required to prioritise Traveller and Roma communities given their severe educational and employment disadvantage.

ATU, as a publicly funded body, has legal obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, which places a duty on public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect the human rights of staff, students, and service users. This Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty requires ATU to assess, address, and report on equality and human rights issues in all its functions, including teaching, research, governance, and service delivery.

These statutory responsibilities are closely aligned with and operationalised through ATU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies, which provide the institutional framework for embedding fairness, respect, and inclusion across the university community. Through its EDI commitments—such as ATU EDI Action Plan (2025-2028), ATU Equality Statement, ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028), ATU Gender Equality Action Plan (2025–2028) —ATU not only meets its legal obligations but also ensures that equality and human rights considerations are systematically integrated into decision-making, practices, and strategic planning.

3.2 National Policy Influences

The National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 called for

“greater engagement and partnership between higher education institutions and community and voluntary groups (*offering*) significant potential to progress equality and community development and to further social innovation.”

(Des, 2011, p. 76)

It highlighted the need for successful transition into higher education, attainment and transition into postgraduate study or employment. The National Strategy strongly influenced the direction of subsequent National Access Plans (NAP), particularly as regards supporting greater diversity in higher education. NAP (2015-2019) (HEA, 2015) introduced the idea that access to higher education is “everyone’s business”. It introduced targets for participation in higher education by the Traveller community in full-time and part-time education, proposing an increase from 35 students (0.1% of entrants) to 80 across all HEIs in Ireland. Despite the low numbers involved, this target was not met (OECD, 2024, p. 189).

NAP (2022-2028) affirms a whole of education and a whole of government approach in widening access and participation in higher education. The Plan identifies three main groups underrepresented in higher education:

1. Socioeconomically disadvantaged.
2. Traveller and Roma Communities.
3. Students with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities.

It should be noted that while Traveller and Roma communities are identified as a standalone group, they are also included in the other two priority groups and are, therefore, regarded as a significant priority group within the context of access and widening participation nationally.



Fig. 5: HEA PATH 5 funded Afterschool Programme. Taster sessions (Science) at ATU Donegal, March -April 2024

In 2023, ATU endorsed the HEA [Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions](#). The principles are a guiding charter for all institutions of higher education and include six fundamental declarations:

- i. an acknowledgement that race inequality exists in Irish higher education institutions.
- ii. a commitment to rejecting all forms of racial discrimination.
- iii. an emphasis on institutional accountability and ownership of race equality issues.
- iv. a recognition that progress can only be achieved through concrete actions.
- v. an understanding of the need for greater ethnic diversity among staff and students.
- vi. an assertion that higher education institutions have a critical role to play in shaping a broader anti-racist society.

ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028) is guided by these principles, and they are embedded in its design to ensure it reflects contemporary best practice. The Action Plan is also informed by NAPAR (2023 – 2027).

Alongside this, the HEA leads initiatives on gender equality and broader equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Collectively, these emphasise proactive, data-informed approaches, engagement with underrepresented groups, and the integration of equality across governance, management, teaching, learning and research. In response, ATU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (2025–2028), ATU Equality Statement and ATU Gender Equality Action Plan (2025–2028) translate these priorities into targeted actions, including improving representation, supporting diverse staff and student experiences, and strengthening responses to racism and discrimination.

3.3 Funding commitments

ATU, through the WNW Connect Cluster in conjunction with University of Galway, successfully sourced funding under HEA PATH 3 for the salaries of two temporary Traveller Education Officers across the region. In 2025, ATU secured long-term HEA PATH 3 funding and committed to the recruitment of one permanent role of Traveller and Roma Education Officer. The funding does not include operational funding.

ATU also successfully sourced funding under HEA PATH 5 in 2023. This funding provides for five distinct work packages directed at specific engagement with other education providers, Traveller advocacy groups and other stakeholders as well as providing for increased engagement with Traveller and Roma communities institutionally. While HEA PATH 5 provided €1.35 million in funding towards Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland over three years across all HEI's, when divided across the Traveller community (32,949) and the Roma community (16,059), the HEA PATH 5 fund nationally provides approximately €9 per individual per annum from Traveller and Roma communities. PATH 5 funding, initially due to end in December 2025, has been extended and is now due to end in December 2026.

A relatively small amount of funding under PATH 3 and PATH 5 has supported a significant amount of work too large to reflect in this document but available through HEA reports submitted annually. A brief overview of key achievements between 2022-2026 are as follows:

- Established or consolidated relationships between ATU and Traveller Advocacy groups, other education providers and other stakeholders across the region.
- Provided for the first Traveller and Roma exhibitions at ATU campuses.
- Contributed towards customised Traveller-led programmes, leading to QQI awards across the education sector from QQI Levels 4 and 5 with MSLETB to QQI Level 6 at ATU Mayo, ATU Galway and ATU Donegal.
- Provided wraparound supports and information to students as required.
- Funded three Yellow Flag Programmes for schools in the region, bringing the programme to Donegal and Sligo for the first time.
- Increased understanding of Traveller and Roma history and culture in ATU and provided training to ATU's Access and Widening Participation staff and other key student services.
- Funded an Afterschool Programme delivered by Donegal Travellers Project with on-campus activity at ATU Donegal included in provision. Due to its success, the programme has been expanded to include South Donegal, with links being developed with ATU Sligo.
- Provided increased awareness of Traveller and Roma communities through atu.ie/traveller-roma, a variety of customised print material, advertisements and ATU magazine articles highlighting work in this area.

Nationally, funding commitments towards Traveller and Roma education and institutional delivery by higher education institutions (HEIs) require critical examination when juxtaposed with other substantial funding tranches and initiatives delivered across the sector more generally. This is developmental work which requires ongoing, sustained engagement by ATU if it is to harness the positive engagement which is evident in the region. Continued trust in ATU as an education partner requires the University to sustain this work beyond short-term funding streams.

ATU can be commended for its commitment to increased provision for Traveller and Roma communities in the Performance Agreement between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and ATU. Performance Objective 3 – Access and Participation, firmly speaks to ATU's commitment and approach to its work in this area and will propel significant attention towards increasing participation in higher education from Traveller and Roma communities. With the extension of PATH 3 funding, ATU committed to the recruitment of a permanent role of Traveller and Roma Education Officer. It also successfully sourced funding under PATH 4 to undertake a review of Traveller and Roma related Research and Curriculum Development, due to be completed in August 2026. ATU has committed core funding towards a Traveller and Roma Communities Bursary, commencing in 2026.

ATU currently provides significant levels of reporting on several interconnected legislative and policy requirements including progress in the delivery of Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the advancement of gender equality and the implementation of HEA anti-racism principles. In addition to Performance Agreement, PATH 3, 4 and 5 funding as well as NAP (2022-2028), ATU is required to report progress on specific actions identified in the recently published National Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) (2024-2030) and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II (NTRIS) (2024-2028). One of the main criticisms of Traveller and Roma Advocacy groups has been the lack of delivery and accountability with respect to commitments made under previous strategies and this is acknowledged in the Minister's Forward (DCEDIY, 2024). It will be important for ATU to progress objectives under TRES and NTRIS but also to provide transparency and accountability, demonstrating progress but also acknowledging when targets are not being met and why this is so.



Fig. 6: HEA PATH 5 funded Afterschool Programme. Taster sessions (Sports) at ATU Donegal, March -April 2024

3.4 Wider institutional, regional, national, European and international commitments

Provision for Traveller and Roma Education adds to the aims of the following wider requirements and initiatives at ATU some of which have been alluded to above:

- ATU's Strategic Plan (Enabling Education addressing all five values Respect, Collaboration, Inclusion, Ambition, Trust, Innovation across most actions)
- ATU-HEA Performance Agreement (2024-2028)
- ATU's first Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028) under the HEA's Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions.
- ATU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan
- ATU Equality Statement
- ATU External Engagement Strategy
- ATU Altitude Charter
- Healthy Campus Framework
- EU Green Alliance: Inclusive Education

Outside of ATU, initiatives identified and undertaken by ATU in collaboration with others will support a wide range of parallel international objectives. Education plays a central role in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4: Quality Education, while also contributing to broader goals such as reducing inequalities, promoting decent work, and fostering peaceful and inclusive societies. Education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to address global challenges such as poverty, climate change and social injustice. Crucially, the SDGs emphasise the importance of partnerships (SDG 17), recognising that governments,

educational institutions, communities and civil society must work collaboratively to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all. Through strong partnerships, resources, expertise and lived experiences can be shared, enabling more responsive, culturally relevant and impactful educational initiatives that leave no one behind.

Traveller and Roma communities experience significant health inequalities that are closely linked to wider social determinants such as poverty, discrimination, housing instability, and limited access to education and employment. This aligns directly with the World Health Organization's (WHO) focus on improving the social determinants of health for disadvantaged populations, which emphasises tackling the underlying social and economic conditions that drive poor health outcomes. Supporting equitable access to education, training, and inclusive services for Traveller and Roma communities, therefore, contributes not only to social inclusion, but also to improved health and wellbeing outcomes in line with WHO priorities.

ATU also supports EU, national and local governmental aims such as:

- EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025 (European Pillar of Social Rights - education and employment).
- National Action Plan Against Racism: Objective Two- Addressing ethnic inequalities.
- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People: Action 2-Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development.
- Creating Futures: Further Education and Training Strategy 2026-2030: Inclusion for Prosperity and Cohesion and Collaborating for Impact.
- Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), Statement of Strategy 2023-2026: Strategic Objective 1.
- National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance: Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030) Pillar 3, Objective 6 - Promote inclusion and equity of access.
- Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion: A Strategy for County Donegal (2021-2026).

4. ATU's Response and Rationale

ATU has developed a long-term approach to Traveller and Roma Education in the region. The approach aims to provide for:

National requirements	Regional requirements	Institutional requirements
Human Rights based approach: Equity of Opportunity	Flexible and adaptable funding provision, future NAPs and policy directions	Stakeholder Engagement (collaborative approach with Traveller and Roma communities externally and internally)
Whole of Education Approach	Whole of Government Approach	Customised approach - individual and localised needs

Fig. 7: Influences in shaping ATU's long-term approach to Traveller and Roma Education

The ERSI's (2024) report on *Understanding Attitudes to Travellers and Roma in Ireland* highlights the large numbers of Travellers in employment working within Traveller organisations and suggests “a level of recruitment discrimination” (2024, p. 6). Former Senator Eileen Flynn, member of the Traveller community and chair of *Joint Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community*, (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2024) alluded to the need for all education providers to provide for the ambitions of Traveller communities in a wide variety of career interest areas, as with the remainder of the population.

I am sitting here and thinking of my child who has dreams, but I was once a child who had dreams. We are expected to go on and work in Traveller organisations or go on and be the Traveller, to go on and be just people who work with and for our own community. When my child grows up and if she reaches her potential and becomes a doctor like she wants to, does she just operate on Travellers?

Former Senator Eileen Flynn, Joint Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community, 11 April 2024



Fig. 8: ATU St. Angela's Library Display in celebration of Traveller Ethnicity Day (1 March 2024)

4.1 Governance and Oversight

In 2023, ATU established a Traveller and Roma Advisory Group to provide governance and oversight to work involving commitments made under PATH 3 and PATH 5 and to ensure that ATU continues to meet targets agreed with the HEA under NAP (2022-2028) and ATU's Performance Agreement (2024-2028). ATU's Access and Widening Participation Service Manager, who reports on NAP 2022-2028, chairs the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group was reconstituted in 2026 to provide for wider internal representation within ATU's functions (e.g. inclusion of EDI office) and, importantly, increased representation from Traveller and Roma communities both internally and externally. Revised Terms of Reference were also agreed with representatives from Traveller and Roma communities both internally and externally.

ATU Traveller and Roma Advisory Group		
Governance and Oversight		
Framework: Pillars x 3		
Long-term approach, Direction, Priorities, Funding, Evaluation		
Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3
External Engagement	External Engagement	Internal Engagement
Other Education Providers	Traveller Advocacy Groups and other stakeholders	Institutional Developments

**Framework developed drawing on the objectives of
National Access Plan (NAP) 2022-2028**

Traveller and Roma: one of three priority groups.

NAP Guiding Principles and Priorities: inform ATU's approach to work

1. *a partnership approach with shared responsibility across government, the education sector and the community ...student success is "everybody's business"*
2. *prioritising resources and looking at barriers*
3. *move beyond access to full participation and eventual success*
4. *flexible pathways that work for people's life situations*
5. *evidence-informed approach so that goals are based on quality data*

NAP Strategic Student-Centred Goals: underpin ATU's actions and initiatives.



Fig 9: ATU's long-term approach to Traveller and Roma Education

4.2 Initiatives and developments (2022-2026)

ATU has focused on developing a framework for Traveller and Roma education at ATU through the delivery of initiatives and developments under three pillars in partnership with three key stakeholder groups: (1) Other Education Providers; (2) Traveller Advocacy Groups (and other Stakeholders) and (3) Institutional engagement. Samples of the work areas are provided below (see Appendix 1 for detailed information).

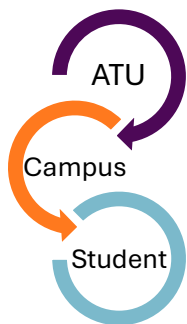
ATU Traveller and Roma Framework		
Sample activities: 2022-2026		
Pillar 1 - External	Pillar 2 - External	Pillar 3 - Internal
Other Education Providers	Traveller Advocacy Groups and other stakeholders	Institutional engagement
• Pre-school • Primary • Post-Primary • Further Education and Training • Other HEIs	• Traveller and Roma Advocacy Groups • Other stakeholders such as partnership companies, local authorities	
Examples: • Funding and delivery of Yellow Flag Intercultural Awareness Programme x 3 schools with Irish Traveller Movement • Campus visits and events • Outreach visits and taster sessions • Home School and Community Liaison (working with parents/guardians) • ETB: partnership approach to work, particularly in FET • Liaising with other HEIs	Examples: • Introduction to Community Development Practice • ATU-DTP Afterschool Programme in Donegal • Campus familiarisation days and events • Taster sessions, on-campus and outreach • Information and support applying to accredited programmes • Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion Strategy, Donegal Co. Council – implementation	Examples: • Transition supports applications, entry routes, RPL, registration, learning support, financial support, maths support • Free Access courses • Events, exhibitions, communications • Customised programmes (accredited, unaccredited, on campus, outreach) • ATU Race Equality Action Plan • Research and Curriculum Development baseline data

Fig.10: ATU Traveller and Roma Framework, sample activities 2022-2026

4.3 Proposed work (2026-2030)

Work areas have been identified for the remaining years of NAP (2022-2028) and the TRES (2024-2030), i.e. 2026-2030. As mentioned previously, this work is developmental. However, it is clear at this stage that **five key themes** have emerged from work completed to date. These themes and corresponding actions are informed by key Government policies, institutional policies, a variety of higher education related reports with significant inputs from Traveller and Roma communities as well as consultation with representative groups from these communities and ATU internal considerations, primarily as follows:

1. NAP (2022-2028)
2. TRES (2024-2030)
3. NTRIS (2024-2028)
4. Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty
5. *Hand the Shame Back: A Qualitative Study of Traveller Experiences Across the Education Continuum - Enabling a University for All* (UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, 2024)
6. The Traveller Graduate Network: A formative evaluation of a new initiative to support Travellers in education (SOAR, 2021)
7. Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education (2019-2021)
8. Travellers In Higher Education Project: An Overview 2021-2023 (ATU, 2023)
9. Report on the Special Purpose Award in Community Development Practice (ATU, 2024)
10. Understanding Attitudes to Travellers and Roma in Ireland (ESRI, 2024)
11. Barriers to Higher Education for the Roma Community (ATU, 2026)
12. National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR) (2023–2027)
13. ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028)
14. DEIS Strategy and DEIS Plus Scheme and Implementation Plan

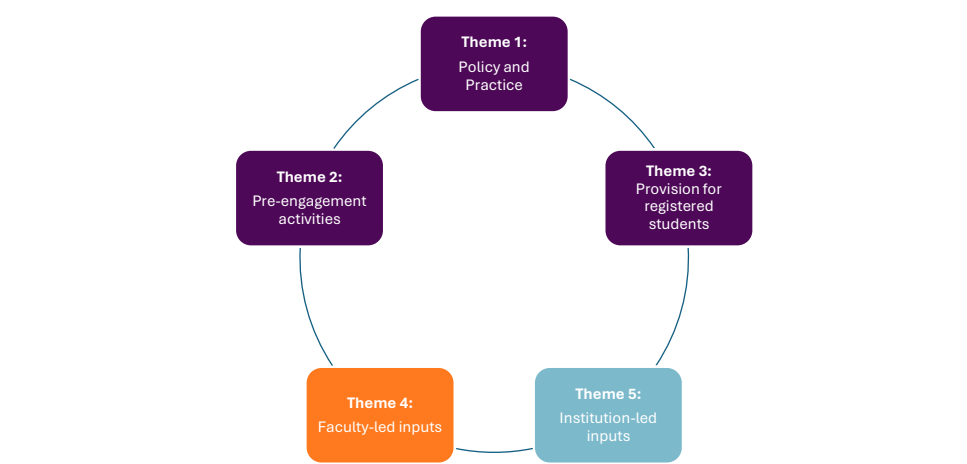


Fig. 11: Five Key Themes in delivery of ATU Traveller and Roma Education

Actions associated with each theme are outlined in Appendix 1.

5. Priority actions (informed by Government policies, Traveller and Roma-led reports, key institutional policies and stakeholder meetings)

5.1 [NAP \(2022-2028\)](#)

Provides six student-centred goals (Inclusivity; Flexibility; Clarity; Coherence; Sustainability; Evidence-driven approach) and detailed objectives and actions under each goal.

5.2 [TRES \(2024-2030\)](#)

Specifies a number of clearly defined actions aligned with lead Government Departments, including DFHERIS. ATU has identified actions required for attention under TRES (2024-2030) and areas under the remit of other Departments and agencies where it feels there are possibilities for contribution or where other policies such as NAP (2022-2028) require input such as 2.4.1 Transition supports and 1.7.3 Homework Clubs.

5.3 [NTRIS \(2024-2028\)](#)

Theme 1: Combatting Racism and Discrimination requests that all public bodies, including HEIs, satisfy the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. *Theme 5: Employment and Enterprise* requires input from public sector in the provision of quality employment for Traveller and Roma communities as well as other relevant objectives. *Theme 7: Education* requires ATU to examine provision of equity of access, opportunity and outcomes for Traveller and Roma communities.

5.4 [Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#)

As a public body, the organisation is required to fulfil obligations under the Public Sector Duty, provided for in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission [Act](#) 2014, which states that

A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to

- a) eliminate discrimination,
- b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

(Government of Ireland, 2014)

5.5 Hand the Shame Back: A Qualitative Study of Traveller Experiences Across the Education Continuum – Enabling a University for All (UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, 2023).

This study was commissioned by UCD using Dormant Accounts Funding to examine Travellers' experiences of higher education and their experiences of access, participation, and progression, in particular. The research was conducted by Dr. Hannagh McGinley, Assistant Professor in Education, Mary Immaculate College and member of the Traveller community. The research recommends a number of actions which ATU supports, including:

- a) clarity of communication, including improved access to information on routes into higher education, supports in higher education and programmes on offer.
- b) provision of Access Courses and wraparound supports typically delivered by Access Offices.
- c) pre-engagement activities and early interventions.
- d) customised engagement with Traveller community, families and parents/guardians
- e) good career guidance.
- f) simplified funding processes.
- g) mentoring programmes.
- h) staff training and increased visibility of Traveller history and culture.
- i) the provision of safe spaces on campus.

5.6 The Traveller Graduate Network: A formative evaluation of a new initiative to support Travellers in education (SOAR, 2021)

This report includes a range of recommendations including

- a) a partnership approach between HEIs, Traveller advocacy groups, other education providers and policymakers.
- b) a Traveller Culture and Education Coordinator (much like the Traveller Education Officer role at ATU) which would provide outreach engagement, institutional awareness and “promotion of Access Services and other student services” (SOAR, 2021, p. 62).
- c) campus familiarisation activities and customised information to be provided by Access Offices.
- d) provision of mentoring programmes for students from Traveller communities.
- e) the delivery of the Yellow Flag Programme to schools.
- f) compulsory intercultural and anti-racism education to schools and in initial teacher education.



Fig. 12: First combined Traveller-Roma Exhibition at ATU Donegal as part of EU Belong-One Donegal Social Inclusion Week, March 2024

5.7 Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education (2019-2021).

This was issued by DES in 2015 and has nine objectives, including:

- a) a partnership approach between HEIs, Traveller advocacy groups, other education providers, Home School and Community Liaison personnel, and policymakers.
- b) customised engagement with Traveller community, families and parents/guardians to be delivered by Access Offices.
- c) develop transition programmes and pathways from schools and other routes into higher education.
- d) develop transition programmes into employment.
- e) strengthen links with guidance counsellors.
- f) Traveller history and culture awareness within HEIs.
- g) improve evidence-based approach to work and provide greater transparency through improved data collection.
- h) integrate needs of Traveller communities into HEI Performance Agreements and Student Success Strategies.

5.8 Travellers in Higher Education Project: An Overview (2021-2023) (ATU, 2023).

This report was provided by David Friel, member of the Traveller community and mentor as part of work with ATU's Access and Widening Participation Service (2021-2023) which was funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund.

- a) partnership approach between HEIs, Traveller advocacy groups, including Traveller Graduate Network, other stakeholders and policymakers.

- b) supporting a whole of education approach (including Afterschool Programme development in south Donegal).
- c) one-to-one mentoring .
- d) customised academic support.
- e) customised information on Irish education system and culturally appropriate support materials (e.g. finance, counselling, etc).
- f) provision of inclusive environments.
- g) co-designed academic programmes.

5.9 Report on the Special Purpose Award in Community Development Practice (ATU, 2024).

Several recommendations emanated from an evaluation report completed at the end of the delivery of a Special Purpose Award (SPA) in Community Development Practice. This programme was developed and offered in 2024 at ATU Mayo and ATU Galway City in response to the needs of Traveller advocacy groups and communities in these areas. Recommendations included:

- a) ATU to engage in a partnership approach to supporting educational needs of Traveller community.
- b) customised approaches (UDL) in advertising, application processes, registration processes, timetabling, class sizes and room allocation as a way of reducing barriers to higher education for members of the Traveller community.
- c) specific supports for Traveller community available at ATU campuses
- d) clarity and information on pathways to higher education and ATU supports, including open days and information events specifically targeted at Traveller community.
- e) the valuing of customised approaches to work practices and allocation of resources towards these approaches is an essential aspect of this work.
- f) provision of hospitality as an essential component in the delivery of programmes to nomadic communities.
- g) cultural awareness training to be delivered to all ATU staff.
- h) greater visibility for equality and diversity policies at ATU.
- i) option of availing of academic writing and ICT skills classes alongside or as part of academic programmes.
- j) development of employment pathways in ATU for members of the Traveller community.
- k) representation from the Traveller community on ATU boards and committees.



Fig. 13: *Pavee Beoirs Whiden' (Traveller Women Talking): creative arts project presented by ATU Access and Widening Participation Service in March 2024 to mark International Women's Day. This was the very first Traveller exhibition at ATU Donegal.*

5.10 Understanding Attitudes to Travellers and Roma in Ireland, ESRI, 2024

The ESRI (2024) published a report on attitudes to Traveller and Roma in December 2024 which is also relevant in the context of institutional roles in “reproducing racism and preventing people from enjoying their rights” (ESRI, p. vii). Findings and recommendations include:

- Confirmation using existing data and literature that Traveller and Roma communities are “very disadvantaged” and that “attitudes to Travellers and Roma among the general population are startlingly negative” (ESRI, 2024, p. 38).
- Tolerance towards Traveller and Roma communities increases with levels of education.
- Volunteering, involvement in civic engagement activities provides for increased tolerance, interaction across groups leading to attitudinal changes amongst the general population.
- Providing “information to counter negative stereotypes about Travellers and Roma- however this may be done” (ESRI, 2024, p. 43).

5.11 Barriers to Higher Education for the Roma Community in Ireland

In 2024, the ATU Access and Widening Participation Service commissioned a PATH 5–funded report examining barriers and challenges faced by the Roma community in Ireland. Developed to inform the work of the ATU Traveller and Roma Advisory Group (established in 2023), the report provides evidence-based insights into the educational

needs of Roma communities. Its primary aim is to support the development and prioritisation of initiatives to enhance Roma participation in higher education. Broad and education-specific recommendations are provided. Proposals for higher education include:

- Undertake further research on equitable education at primary, post-primary and tertiary levels
- Embed awareness of Roma community across higher education campuses
- Educator Diversity: create targeted measures to increase representation
- Ringfence Student Accommodation for Traveller and Roma Students
- Increase Financial Supports and Create Dedicated Funding Streams

5.12 National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR) 2023–2027

NAPAR (2023–2027) sets out Ireland’s strategic commitment to eliminating racism in all its forms and promoting a fair, inclusive society. It envisions a purposefully anti-racist state in which everyone can experience safety, equality, dignity, and full participation, regardless of their background.

NAPAR provides a structured framework for action, organised around five core objectives:

1. Being Safe and Being Heard
2. Being Equal
3. Being Seen and Taking Part
4. Being Counted
5. Being Together

5.13 ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028)

As referenced earlier, the HEA leads initiatives on gender equality and broader equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), addressed under ATU’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (2025–2028), ATU Equality Statement and ATU Gender Equality Action Plan (2025–2028).

The HEA Anti-Racism Principles, endorsed by ATU in 2023, led to the development of ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028). This Action Plan commits the University to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist institution where all can thrive regardless of racial or ethnic background. Acknowledging the persistence of racism in society and higher education, the plan is grounded in institutional self-assessment, consultation, and best practice. It identifies key priorities for coordinated institution-wide change across six themes:

- Culture, Leadership and Strategy
- Data
- People
- Processes
- Inclusive Teaching and Learning
- Supports and Community Engagement

Actions within ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028) align with and support those outlined in ATU's Traveller and Roma Framework: Supporting Educational Progression for Members of Traveller and Roma Communities, which recognises the distinct experiences of these groups and prioritises culturally responsive supports, increased participation, and the removal of systemic barriers.

While the ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028) focuses primarily on staff and registered students, the Traveller and Roma Framework takes a broader, whole-of-education and whole-of-government collaborative approach, working with community and statutory partners to expand educational opportunities across all levels of provision in education. It also aligns strongly with national policy priorities, including NAP (2022–2028), TRES (2024–2030), and NTRIS II (2024–2028), which extend the role of higher education to supporting stakeholders beyond ATU.

5.14 DEIS Strategy and DEIS Plus Scheme and Implementation Plan

In 2026, DES published a ten-year strategy to address educational disadvantage, alongside a DEIS Plus scheme and implementation plan which represents a strengthened and more targeted extension of the DEIS programme, focusing on schools with the highest concentrations of students at risk of educational disadvantage and providing enhanced, sustained supports to these school communities. Similar to the type of work underway as part of ATU Traveller and Roma Framework, DEIS Plus scheme will promote:

- greater integration of community-based services and area-based initiatives with schools
- Enhanced collaboration between schools, third-level institutions, community services, and industry to address area-specific challenges



Fig. 14: *Talk on Traveller History and Culture at ATU Galway in celebration of Traveller Ethnicity Day (1 March 2024)*

6. Programme of work: Summary (2022-2030)

As mentioned previously, ATU engages with Traveller and Roma communities across three pillars or groups of internal and external stakeholders. A formal and structured approach to this work commenced in 2022 aligned to Phase 2 of PATH 3.

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3
Other Education Providers	Traveller Advocacy Groups and other stakeholders	Institutional stakeholders
External	External	Internal

Actions have been consolidated using five themes to direct the work of ATU and the work of ATU's Access and Widening Participation Service, in particular, which bears reporting responsibility for NAP (2022-2028), TRES (2024-2030) and ATU-HEA Performance Agreement, Objective 3. The actions have been identified using an evidence-based approach by a combination of HEA requirements, national policy including NTRIS and TRES and key reports as outlined in Section 5 above. They have more recently been informed by external stakeholders, including Traveller and Roma advocacy groups. The themes are as follows:

Theme 1: Policy and Practice: Delivery by ATU of national, regional and institutional aims and objectives

Theme 2: Pre-engagement Activities: Transition supports and clear communications

Theme 3: Provision for registered students: Transition and attainment supports and clear communications

Theme 4: Faculty-led activities: Integration of Traveller and Roma interests into curriculum and research interests

Theme 5: Institution-led activities: Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

ATU's Access and Widening Participation Service has responsibility for progressing actions under the first three themes while the remaining two themes are led out by Faculty and University-wide themes. The Actions associated with this framework are outlined in Appendix 1.

7. Reporting, evaluation and resourcing

7.1 Reporting

Annual reports are required by the HEA (NAP 2022-2028, Performance Agreement 2024-2028) and DES (TRES 2024-2030, NTRIS II (2024-2028)) on ATU's progress in delivering increased opportunities and provision to Traveller and Roma communities in accessing higher education.

ATU's Access and Widening Participation Service will continue to lead out on relevant reporting requirements, in consultation with ATU Traveller and Roma Advisory Group and other relevant internal and external stakeholders.

ATU EDI Office will continue to lead out on relevant ATU wide reporting requirements which relate to overarching EDI policy practice and implementation.



Fig. 15: Selection of staff members from ATU's Access and Widening Participation Service and Student Services who took part in Traveller and Roma Cultural Competency in Higher Education Training as part of Traveller Pride Week. Also included are members of Donegal Travellers Project who delivered the training (May 2024).

7.2 Evaluation

Mechanisms have been developed to capture, measure and evaluate progress aimed at satisfying requirements set out by DFHERIS, HEA, external stakeholders as well as institutional requirements, providing transparency and accountability to Traveller and Roma communities, celebrating achievements and working together to overcome

challenges as they materialise. ATU Traveller and Roma Advisory Group may seek to further develop evaluation of progress against the themes and actions.

7.3 Resourcing

Much has been achieved with relatively small amounts of funding under PATH 3 and PATH 5 with further commitments made by ATU. These include:

- ATU committed to the recruitment of one Traveller and Roma Education Officer as part of a welcomed extension of funding under PATH 3. The recruitment process was completed in January 2026.
- Additionally, PATH 4 funding was secured in 2025 to undertake an analysis so as provide baseline data on the inclusion of Traveller and Roma communities within curriculum and research activity at ATU.
- In 2026, ATU announced a core-funded Traveller and Roma Communities Bursary, ringfencing financial supports for these communities.

However, as evidenced previously, there is quite a way to go to achieve equality of opportunities in higher education for members of the Traveller and Roma communities. Progress on actions outlined in the Framework will require a variety of resources, including funding, time and a visible commitment to inclusion and diversity at ATU.

8. Summary

ATU has completed its first phase of work with respect to Traveller and Roma Education (i.e. 2022-2024). This work has included the development of a long-term approach to the work, the provision of governance and oversight through ATU's Traveller and Roma Advisory Group and the development of clear internal and external engagement practices through three pillars:

1. Other Education Providers;
2. Traveller Advocacy Groups and other stakeholders; and
3. Institutional Engagement.

An evidence-based approach has been applied throughout and a workplan has been devised for the next four-year phase which covers the period of the NAP (2022-2028), NTRIS (2024-2028) and the TRES (2024-2030). Proposed actions are based on relevant HEA requirements and other recommendations from a variety of higher-education relevant reports with significant inputs from Traveller and Roma communities.

Five themes have emerged which support consolidation of actions across the workplan:

- Theme 1: policy and practice
- Theme 2: pre-engagement activities
- Theme 3: provision for registered students
- Theme 4: Faculty-led initiatives
- Theme 5: Institution-led initiatives

The approach outlined above will provide for long-term planning, delivery, evaluation and accountability, keeping Traveller and Roma communities at the centre of ATU's work.



Fig 16: HEA PATH 5 funded Afterschool Programme. Taster sessions (Design) at ATU Donegal, March -April 2024

9. List of Abbreviations

AITHS: All Ireland Traveller Health Study

ATU: Atlantic Technological University

CSO: Central Statistics Office

DCEDIY: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

DEASP: Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

DES/DEY: Department of Education and Skills/ Department of Education and Youth

DEIS: Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

DFHERIS: Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

DoE: Department of Education

DTP: Donegal Travellers Project

ESRI: Economic and Social Research Institute

FET: Further Education and Training

GRETB: Galway-Roscommon Education and Training Board

GTM: Galway Traveller Movement

HEA: Higher Education Authority

HEI: Higher Education Institution

MSLETB: Mayo-Sligo-Leitrim Education and Training Board

NAP: National Access Plan

NCCA: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NTRIS: National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PATH: Programme for Access to Higher Education

REEAP: Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan

STSG: Sligo Traveller Support Group

TGN: Traveller Graduate Network

TRES: Traveller and Roma Education Strategy

UCD: University College Dublin

UDL: Universal Design for Learning

WHO: World Health Organisation

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Appendix 1 – ATU Traveller & Roma Framework – Action Plan

Notes:

- Actions associated with the ATU Traveller and Roma Framework will be continuous for the framework timeframe i.e. 2022 – 2030.
- Actions associated with Themes 1, 2 and 3 will be led by the Access and Widening Participation Service
- Actions associated with Theme 4 are Faculty led actions.
- Actions associated with Theme 5 are University led actions

Theme 1: Policy and Practice		
Objective		Actions
Delivery by ATU on national, regional and institutional aims and objectives as they relate to increased participation of Traveller and Roma communities in higher education.	1.1	Provide strategic direction and leadership in the development and provision of fair and inclusive access to and success in higher education for members of the Traveller and Roma communities.
	1.2	Recognise and highlight the rights of the Traveller and Roma communities to quality education that is free from racism and discrimination at every opportunity.
	1.3	Through the establishment of a Traveller and Roma Advisory Group, provide a safe space for discussion and dialogue between relevant internal and external stakeholders, acknowledging the historical role that educational institutions, including higher education, have played in perpetuating exclusion, racism, and inequality, resulting in limited educational opportunities for these communities.
	1.4	Ensure that the needs, aspirations and ambitions of Traveller and Roma communities have a prominent space in to ATU's efforts to deliver fair and inclusive educational opportunities.
	1.5	Collaborate with national and regional Traveller and Roma advocacy groups, other education providers and other stakeholders both externally and internally to identify and respond to emerging challenges affecting access to and participation in higher education.
	1.6	Oversee and implement ATU's commitments under the National Access Plan, the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy, ATU- Higher Education Authority (HEA) Performance Agreement, and other relevant national and institutional frameworks focused on equitable education, particularly those which include reference to Traveller and Roma communities.
	1.7	Contribute to ATU's report under National Access Plan against Racism (NAPAR) and to ATU's commitments under the Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2026-2028) and other relevant policies and plans coordinated by Equality, Diversity and Inclusion office.
	1.8	Contribute to ATU's commitments under other ATU initiatives such ATU External Engagement Strategy and the implementation of the Altitude Charter.

	1.9	Support ATU in fostering an environment where Traveller and Roma students feel welcomed, do not experience discrimination or racism, and where Traveller and Roma ethnicity is recognised, valued, and celebrated across ATU's nine campuses.
	1.10	Contribute to ATU initiatives where it relates to Traveller and Roma communities. (Work collaboratively to implement common action with Traveller and Romas Framework and ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan 3.2, 6.3))
	1.11	Provide opportunities for voices of Traveller and Roma communities to influence work at ATU.
	1.12	Advocate for systemic reforms aimed at increasing access to and success in higher education for members of Traveller and Roma communities.
	1.13	Develop a structure to support long-term approach to work including the development of a Traveller and Roma Framework.
	1.14	Ensure actions identified as part of the Framework progress within agreed timelines and budgetary guidelines.
	1.15	Plan and secure relevant resources to progress work (including timelines).
	1.16	Develop measurement and evaluation methodology to support the delivery of the Framework and other commitments.
	1.17	Provide information and reports to Traveller and Roma Advisory Group, internal and external stakeholders, including funders and other bodies as necessary.

Theme 2: Pre-Engagement Activities		
Objective		Actions
Using a collaborative co-design approach with Traveller and Roma communities, identify and develop transition supports for Traveller and Roma community and advocacy groups.	2.1	Provide customised information sessions to all stakeholders seeking to support educational transitions for Traveller and Roma communities. (a) Primary to Post Primary, (b) Junior cycle to Senior Cycle, (c) Leaving Cert/LCA to ATU (d) FET including Youthreach, (e) Mature learners, (f) Students with disabilities (g) Apprenticeships (h) homework clubs.
	2.2	Provide outreach and inreach taster sessions to increase awareness, ambitions, attendance and participation of prospective students from Traveller and Roma communities in education at key points in educational journey, including (a) Primary to Post Primary, (b) Junior cycle to Senior Cycle, (c) Leaving Cert/LCA to ATU (d) FET including Youthreach, (e) Mature learners, (f) Students with disabilities (g) Apprenticeships (h) homework clubs.
	2.3	Provide information on access routes and supports at ATU to Traveller and Roma advocacy groups, youth groups, prospective students and parents/guardians.
	2.4	Support students from these communities to apply for and gain entry to ATU's programmes.
	2.5	Consult with second level students (JC/LC) to identify potential ATU supports to support educational progression for members of Traveller and Roma communities.
	2.6	Provide one-to-one supports for students with disabilities from Traveller and Roma communities including targeted talks for parents/guardians, prospective students, schools, and Traveller and Roma advocacy groups on disability services available at ATU.
	2.7	Identify opportunities in ATU for work experience and/or employment for members of the Traveller and Roma Communities.
	2.8	Clearly communicate specific ATU Traveller and Roma contacts, e.g. Traveller and Roma Education Officer, Access and Widening Participation Service with educational providers and Traveller and Roma advocacy groups
	2.9	In liaison with Traveller and Roma community groups, develop Traveller and Roma specific resources such as posters, fliers, webpage, video, packs for visiting groups.
	2.10	Increase the profile of Traveller and Roma communities in Higher Education through a variety of communication channels.
	2.11	Participate in TRES-coordinated Communities of Practice.
	2.12	Promote the delivery of cultural competency training to staff and students involved in pre-entry work.
	2.13	Provide preparatory programmes for higher education, co-designed and co-delivered with Traveller and Roma communities.

Theme 3: Provision for Registered Students		
Objective		Actions
Support transition, retention, attainment and progression of registered students at ATU and into employment.	3.1	Support students from Traveller and Roma communities with programme information, admissions, registration and pre-registration campus induction.
	3.2	Support students from Traveller and Roma communities accessing campus services and supports.
	3.3	Communicate key contacts with registered students: a) Traveller and Roma Education Officer, b) Access and Widening Participation Service c) Race and Ethnic Equality Network d) Minority Race and Ethnic Student Advisory- action 3.2.1 Race Ethnic Equality Action Plan (REEAP) e) Traveller and Roma advocacy groups.
	3.4	In liaison with Traveller and Roma community groups, develop Traveller and Roma specific resources and information such as posters, fliers, webpage, video, packs for visiting groups.
	3.5	Deliver awareness raising initiatives internally of Traveller and Roma communities in Higher Education.
	3.6	Communicate with students from Traveller and Roma communities via Students Union and other relevant communication channels.
	3.7	Increase the profile of Traveller and Roma communities in Higher Education through a variety of communication channels.
	3.8	Annual consultation with Traveller and Roma students on supports required for placements, elective choices, changing direction, progression to postgraduate studies and/or employment.
	3.9	Examine funding and accommodation supports for Traveller and Roma communities. Identify gaps in current provision and source customised supports, where possible.
	3.10	Consider provision of opportunities for employment on campus through work experience, work placements and paid internships at ATU.

Theme 4: Faculty Led Inputs		
Objective		Actions
Increase - the presence of Traveller and Roma communities in the curriculum. - research activity in this area - the number from Traveller and Roma communities with teaching/SNA qualifications - customised academic programmes.	4.1	Undertake an analysis of curriculum and research activity to gain an understanding of current consideration of Traveller and Roma communities perspectives in ATU curricula.
	4.2	Encourage faculty to ensure that the perspectives of Traveller and Roma communities are incorporated into programmatic review process and related documentation.
	4.3	Support increased Traveller and Roma led research.
	4.4	Explore means to increase the number of Traveller and Roma participating on Teacher Education programmes and Special needs Assistant programmes.
	4.5	Provide customised material informing Traveller and Roma communities of routes into teaching.
	4.6	Engage with Traveller and Roma communities to consider barriers to teacher education and SNA programmes and seek to address them.
	4.7	Provide customised academic programmes, co-designed with Traveller and Roma communities.

Theme 5: University Led Inputs		
Objective		Actions
Implement Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty	5.1	Encourage all staff and students to attend training and to be aware of their legal responsibilities and rights under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
	5.2	Carry out an assessment of equality and human rights issues relevant to ATU.
	5.3	Set out the plans, policies and actions necessary to address the human rights and equality issues identified in 5.2.
	5.4	Report on the developments and achievements as a result of the plans, policies and actions put in place to address equality and human rights issues
	5.5	Promote Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Appendix 2 – Rationale for Actions aligned to reported recommendations/required actions

The following tables provide a cross reference of the policies, strategies, action plans, agreements and reports which have influenced the actions in the above Action Plan (Appendix 1).

Theme 1: Policy & Practice
Delivery by ATU on national, regional and institutional aims and objectives as they relate to increased participation of Traveller and Roma communities in higher education
Rationale: Actions required/recommended by: • Technological Universities Act 2018: Section 9, 9(l), in particular • National Strategy for Higher Education 2030: 1.3, 1.6, 3.5, 5.1-5.6 • NAP (2022-2028): Priority Group 2 (of 3 Groups) - Students who are members of Irish Traveller and Roma communities are also found under Priority Groups 1 and 3. • NTRIS: Theme 5: Employment and Enterprise, Theme 7: Education • TRES: 3.3.1 • Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education (2019-2021) • HEA Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions (ATU Race Equality Action Plan) • National Action Plan Against Racism: Objective Two- Addressing ethnic inequalities • Altitude - The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education • ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan (2025-2028) • ATU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy • ATU Performance Agreement: Performance Objective 3 – Access and Participation • ATU Strategic Plan: Enabling Education • ATU Healthy Campus Framework • DEIS (and DEIS Plus) Strategy to 2035 (DEY, 2026) • Creating Futures Further Education and Training Strategy 2026-2030 (SOLAS, 2026) • Hand the Shame Back (UCD, 2023) • Travellers in Higher Education Project (ATU, 2023) • Report on the Special Purpose Award in Community Development Practice (ATU, 2024) • Understanding Attitudes to Travellers and Roma in Ireland (ESRI, 2024) • Other National, European and International priorities and initiatives
Theme 2: Pre-engagement Activities
Identify and develop transition supports in conjunction with other educational providers and Traveller advocacy groups

Rationale: Actions required/recommended by:

- NAP (2022-2028): Student-centred goals (Inclusivity; Flexibility; Clarity; Coherence)
- TRES: 1.7.3, 1.8.2, 1.8.3, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.8.1, 2.8.4, 2.8.4, 2.8.8 and NTRIS: Themes 5 and 7
- Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education (2019-2021): Objective 1,2, 3, 4, 5
- Altitude - The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education
- DEIS (and DEIS Plus) Strategy to 2035 (DEY, 2026)
- Creating Futures Further Education and Training Strategy 2026-2030 (SOLAS, 2026)
- Hand the Shame Back (UCD, 2023)
- Travellers in Higher Education Project (ATU, 2023) and Report, Special Purpose Award in Community Development Practice (ATU, 2024)
- Traveller Culture and History Research Report (NCCA, 2023)

Theme 3: Provision for registered students

Support transition, retention, attainment and progression of registered students at ATU and into employment.

Rationale: Actions required/recommended by:

- NAP (2022-2028): Student-centred goals (Inclusivity; Flexibility; Clarity; Coherence)
- TRES: 1.8.2, 1.8.3, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.8.1, 2.8.6, 2.8.7 and NTRIS: Themes 5 and 7
- Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education (2019-2021): Objective 3, 6, 9
- Altitude - The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education
- ATU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan
- Hand the Shame Back (UCD, 2023) and Traveller Culture and History Research Report (NCCA, 2023)
- Travellers in Higher Education Project (ATU, 2023) and Report, Special Purpose Award in Community Development Practice (ATU, 2024)
- Understanding Attitudes to Travellers and Roma in Ireland (ESRI, 2024)

Theme 4: Faculty-led activities

Increase the presence of Traveller & Roma communities in the curriculum

Rationale: Actions required/recommended by:

- NAP (2022-2028): Student-centred goals (Inclusivity; Flexibility; Evidence- driven approach)
- TRES: 1.1.1, 1.4.4, 1.4.5, 1.5.3, 1.8.1, 1.8.2, 1.8.3, 3.3.1
- NTRIS: Themes 5 and 7
- Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education (2019-2021): Objective 4, 5, 6, 9

- Altitude - The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education
- ATU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan
- Traveller Graduate Network (SOAR, 2021)
- Hand the Shame Back (UCD, 2023) and Traveller Culture and History Research Report, NCCA, 2023
- Travellers In Higher Education Project (ATU, 2023)
- Report, Special Purpose Award in Community Development Practice (ATU, 2024)

Theme 5: Institution-led activities

Implement Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty at ATU.

Rationale: Actions required/recommended by:

- NTRIS: Theme 1
- TRES: 1.8.3
- NAP (2022-2028): Student-centred goals (Inclusivity; Evidence-driven approach)
- Altitude - The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education
- ATU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ATU Race and Ethnic Equality Action Plan