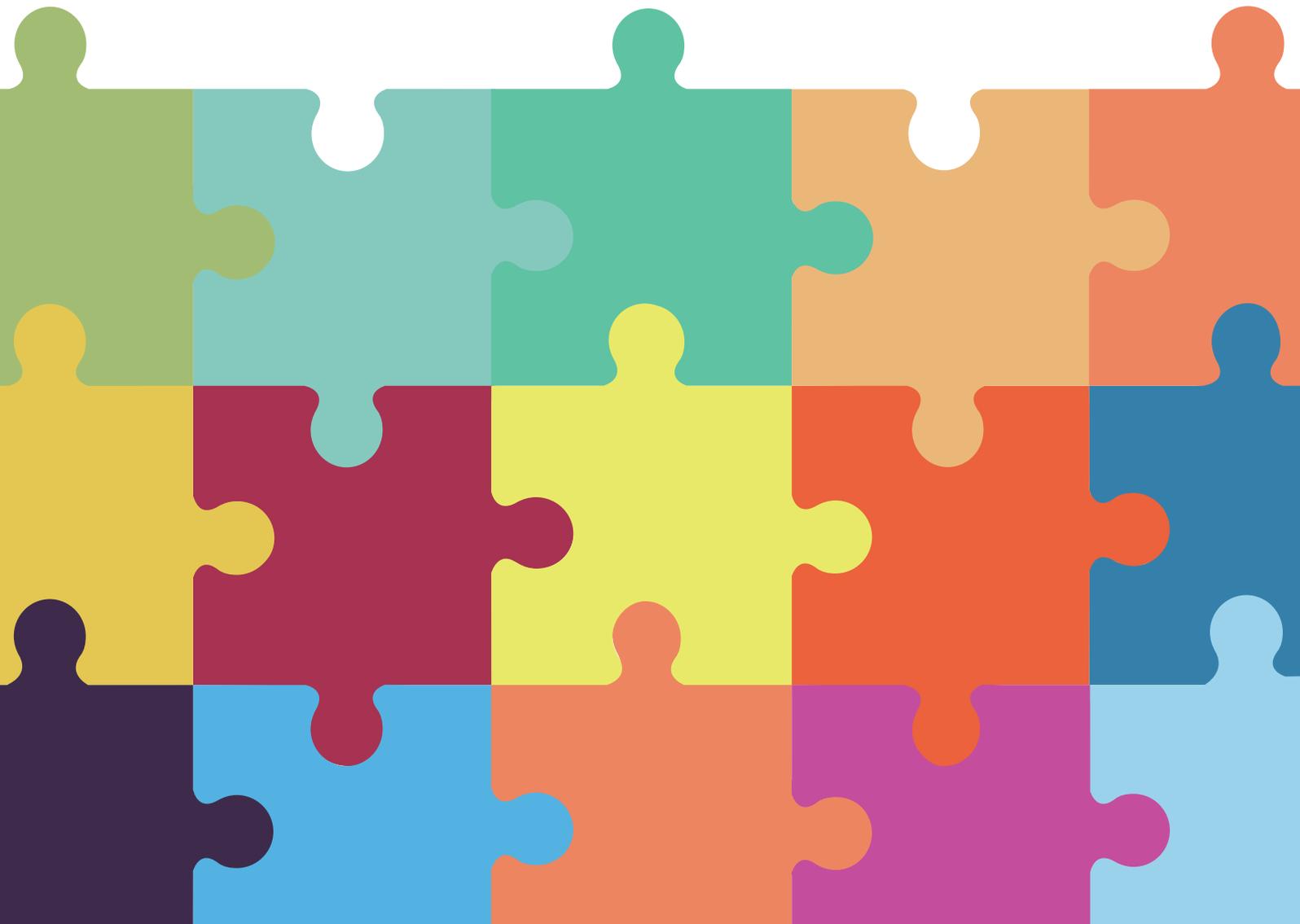
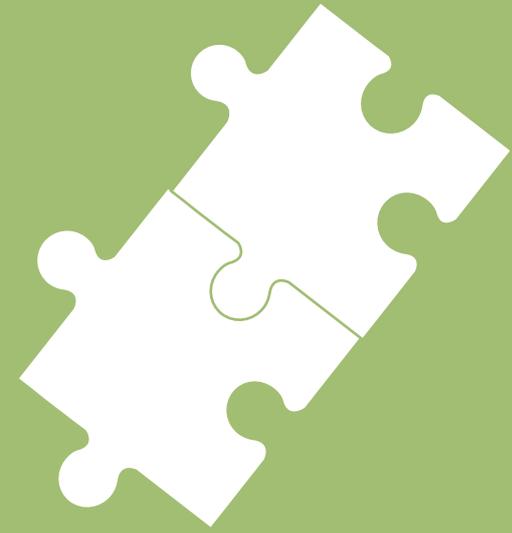


Intersectionality Guide

An introductory guide for all who work and learn in higher education, including terms, strategies and recommendations for the workplace





When diversity is embraced and valued, it can close achievement gaps for students, improve graduation rates, and provide exposure to multiple cultures with broadened worldview.

This guide aims to contribute to discussions about diversity and inclusion. It is not a definitive guide; rather, its remit is to introduce terms and offer initial suggestions for inclusive practice, whilst acknowledging the important ongoing work by scholars, policy-makers and activists in this area.

Table of Contents

Foreword and Acknowledgements

Introduction

Part 1: Overview of Intersectionality

Part 2: Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Environment

Part 3: Strategies for Institutional Hiring

Part 4: Strategies for Retention

Part 5: Strategies for Student Success

Glossary

References

Foreword and Acknowledgements

There is increasing recognition of the complex and intersectional nature of the progression of proactive strategies and practices in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the higher education context in Ireland. This guide is intended to add to awareness raising and capacity building but is not meant as a definitive guide to intersectionality. By design, the emphasis within this guide is primarily on the intersection between gender and race and the associated implications for staff in the higher education system. It introduces a conceptual understanding of intersectionality and provides some practical tips and guidelines for addressing inequality in the context of promoting racial and gender equality. This guide is intended for use by multiple personnel in the higher education context: management, administration, technical and support services, academic and research staff.

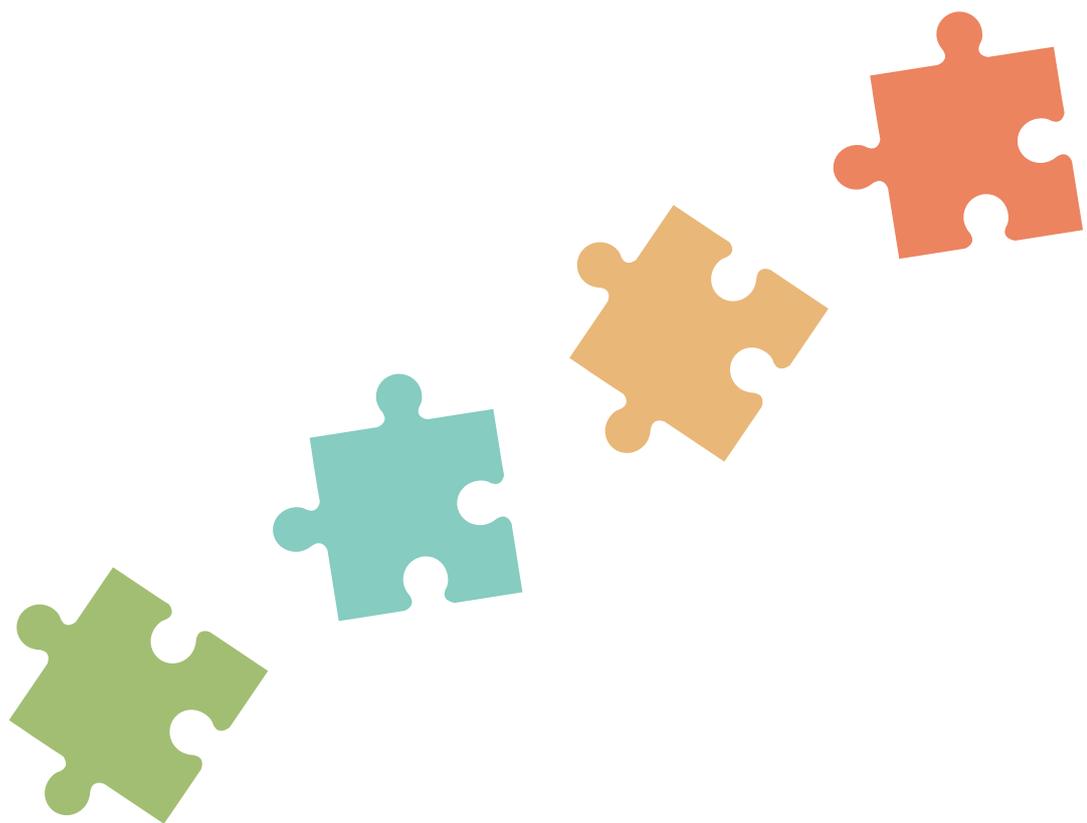
The impetus for developing this resource stems from an understanding of the necessity of adopting good practice approaches to inclusion which are premised on expanding our focus to include race equality. The publication of the report on the national survey on Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector by the HEA in 2021¹ is timely in the development of this guide as it establishes a picture of the experiences of ethnic minority staff in the higher education sector. We acknowledge that this guide is just one aspect of a wider effort that is required in considering the cumulative impact of inequality from an intersectional perspective. Accordingly, this

¹ Kempny, M. and Michael, L. (2021) 'Race Equality in Higher Education', Higher Education Authority.



guide does not seek to capture the full complexity and compounded nature of discrimination when multiple identity characteristics are intersected.

This resource guide is the result of a collaborative project between Carlow College, St. Patrick's and the Institute of Technology Carlow. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Professor Marta Walz for her extensive work in developing this guide and to Dr Susan Flynn for her advice and comments. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the support for this intersectionality project which was funded by the Higher Education Authority via the Athena SWAN National Committee under their 2019 Capacity Building Fund.



Introduction



The Higher Education Authority's Gender Equality Taskforce has set the goal that by 2026, Ireland will be a leading country for gender equality in higher education².

Equality can be defined as the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities. True gender equality is only possible when we expand our understanding of gender and consider other identities that intersect with gender (such as race, ethnicity, physical ability, and more). If fifty percent of the workforce in a higher education institution identify as women, but they are all white, they are all able-bodied, of normative religious beliefs, are all from the ethnic majority, and they are all straight, we have not achieved equality. To realistically meet the gender equality goal, we must reflect on our standard for what is equal, inclusive, and just. We must consider how gender and the multiplicity of other identities interact to create unique experiences. "Equality in education can only be achieved if we recognize the deeply integrated relationship that exists between education and the economic, political, socio-cultural and affective systems in society"³.

These experiences are not only valuable to higher education, they are crucial to it. For the benefit of education, it makes sense to bring in as many voices as we reasonably can. Education must serve as a window and a

² Gender Equality Taskforce. (2018). Accelerating Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions: Gender Action Plan 2018-2020: Report of the Gender Equality Taskforce. Dublin: The Higher Education Authority. Available at: <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2018/11/Gender-Equality-Taskforce-Action-Plan-2018-2020.pdf> (Accessed: 7 July 2020).

³ Lynch, K. & Baker, J. (2005) Theory and Research in Education, 3 (2): 131-164



mirror, reflecting the lived experiences of all students so that they see themselves in the curriculum, and providing students with a window into other lived experiences, so that they can have a broader view of the world and all the people in it⁴.

When diversity is embraced and valued, it can close achievement gaps for students, improve graduation rates, and provide exposure to multiple cultures with a broadened worldview. This helps students, and colleges, prepare to be successful in a multicultural world⁵.

Of equal importance, when academic communities do not promote equality on their campuses, they may be unwittingly reproducing the social inequality that exists in society⁶.

Promoting gender equality in higher

4 Style, E. (1996) Social Science Record. First published in Listening for All Voices, Oak Knoll School monograph, Summit, NJ, 1988.

5 Brown, S. (2021). Diversifying Your Campus. Washington D.C. The Chronicle of Higher Education.

6 Martin, J. and Nakayama, T. (2018). Experiencing Intercultural Communication: An Introduction. 6th edn. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.





Part 1:

Overview Of Intersectionality

Intersectionality:

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in 1989 while reviewing the problematic nature of a case where she represented Black American women in a workplace discrimination suit. White women and Black men had been integrated into the organisation, so the company claimed success in achieving diversity. But women of colour were being left behind. Crenshaw’s writing explains “traditional feminist ideas and antiracist policies exclude black women because they face an overlapping discrimination unique to them”⁷.

Crenshaw, currently professor and Chair of Human Rights for the Promise Institute at the UCLA School of Law, and Columbia Law School, argued that because Black women have two marginalised identities that intersect, the experience of discrimination is amplified. In this particular case, women worked in one department of the company where race discrimination was occurring. Black Americans worked in another department where women were routinely eliminated from participation. Therefore, Black women had no chance of being included. It was not race or gender alone that was the issue, it was the intersection of these identities and the refusal of society to recognise them.

Even antiracist movements have the tendency to focus on men and movements for gender equality often focus on white cis women. Cis, or Cisgender, describes a person whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth. But in 2016, Crenshaw herself asserted that “When feminism doesn’t include anti-racism and when anti-racism doesn’t address misogyny or patriarchy, they reinforce each other”⁸.

⁷ Perlman, M. (2018). ‘The Origin of the Term ‘Intersectionality’’, *Columbia Journalism Review*. Available at: https://www.cjr.org/language_corner/intersectionality.php (Accessed: 20 March 2021).

⁸ Williams Crenshaw, K. (2016). *Keynote at Women of the World 2016*. Available at <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2018/09/27/keynote-at-women-of-the-world-2016-march-12-2016/> (Accessed 10 May 2021).



While Crenshaw is credited for coining the term, the study of the intersecting identities for women of colour began much earlier, and as Patricia Hill Collins explains, the fact most people today do not acknowledge the earlier history of intersectionality as a field of study reflects the idea that the experience of women of colour has been historically ignored—even by feminist and antiracist activists⁹.

“Whether you are an older woman, a gay man with a disability, a trans* woman, or you hold a non-binary gender identity, we are all impacted by the way our identities meet.”

Today, intersectionality has become into an important component of both critical race and feminist theory. And in addition to the growing studies, more organisations are seeking ways to move toward fairness and equality by understanding intersectionality and making changes.

Intersectionality is often used to learn about the experiences of women of colour because they/we have experienced amplified challenges, but we all have intersecting identities. Whoever we are, our gender intersects with our race, with our

class, age, religion, physical ability, and more. Whether you are an older woman, a gay man with a disability, a trans* woman, or you hold a non-binary gender identity, we are all impacted by the way our identities meet. As identities are complex and multifaceted, some aspects of our identity may be associated with privileged groups in society whereas other elements can be representative of more marginalised groups. While there are indications of progress, women of colour and people of other underrepresented identities are not being included in this progress.

It is this lack of inclusion that truly explains the importance of intersectionality. It is not so much the meeting of identities that the study of intersectionality represents, but as Professor Hill Collins explains, it is the identities’ relationship to power in society. Intersectionality examines how structures, systems and policies impact people with marginalised intersecting identities¹⁰. If we are not examining that relationship, we are not pursuing the study of intersectionality.

It’s important to understand that while all women certainly have much in common as women, being a Black woman is different

⁹ Hill Collins, P. and Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality*. 2nd ed. Medford, MA: Polity Press.

¹⁰ Hill Collins, P. and Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality*. 2nd ed. Medford, MA: Polity Press.



from being a white woman. Being a Traveller woman is different from being an immigrant woman to Ireland which is different from being part of the ethnic majority. We have varying levels of access and opportunity in society, for any number of reasons. A number of important studies have explored system inequality and the way in which our social and political structures, institutions and organisations produce and sustain inequality. The HEA Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector report affirms that access and opportunity are not fairly distributed in Irish HE. Intersectionality examines this relationship to power and how it is accessed or denied. If we are looking to

true gender equality, we will look to the need to expand our focus from one identity alone, to broaden our definitions of gender, of diversity, and of inclusion. We must not only include all gender identities, but make a particular effort to create systems that are set up to be more fair and more inclusive on their own, thereby allowing for more underrepresented intersections of identity.

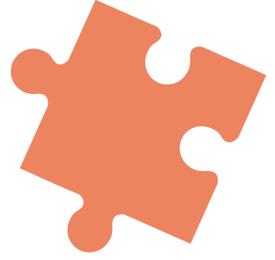
In order to do so requires work. It requires a higher level of awareness of our own behaviour and beliefs as individuals and it requires examination of the systemic and structural barriers that work to further marginalise people with multiple marginalised identities. This is not always easy or comfortable, there are not simple solutions.

But the work is necessary.

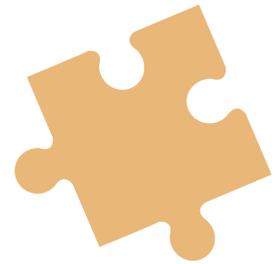
Because there has been an increased interest in the notion of identity and culture, we are offered an opportunity to explore new research and incorporate new strategies to make changes and to remove any structural barriers we encounter. This guide will offer first steps and longer-term goals. To begin, we will look to some additional important concepts.

Culture and Consciousness:

Our identities are elements of culture, so understanding how culture works can add some insight into our work with intersectionality. Culture consists of learned patterns of perception, values, behaviours, shared by a group of people—our skin colour, gender, sexual identity and more are considered cultural identities, but those characteristics do not make our identity. Our cultural identities are learned and created through shared experiences, values and viewpoints.

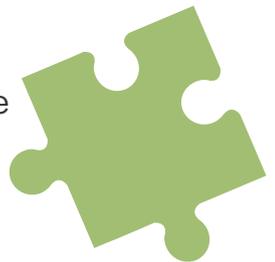
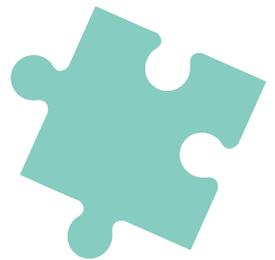


Much of our culture is not visible to others. Anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher Edward T. Hall, described culture as similar to an iceberg with only a small percentage of visible to others. Below the observable surface, our values, beliefs, experiences, joys, and struggles are not visible to others. Even when we look at ourselves, we may not see all of our own beliefs and motivations. Sometimes we lack the language to express our experience or belief. Other times we are not aware of a belief or behaviour until it is pointed out to us. We may not be consciously aware of our communication styles or even know that there is such a thing¹¹. It is important to acknowledge lack of awareness exists. By growing awareness, we equip ourselves to make changes.



Unconscious Learning

While there are some cultural lessons that are taught to us explicitly, much of our norms and values are learned and accepted implicitly, or unconsciously. If everyone in our family and social circle uses a direct communication style, we learn to communicate in this style and view it as the standard for effective communication. When someone practices a different style, we might experience discomfort or confusion and believe the other person has poor communication skills. The other person may or may not actually have poor communication skills, but it is not fair to categorise all other communication styles as ineffective. The reality may be that we are the ones who need to expand our repertoire. But because of our cultural learning, we are unaware that our perspectives may be limited.



¹¹ Hall, Edward T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.



Implicit Bias and Privilege

Implicit Bias is an unconscious preference for our own cultural identity and its way of performing. In the communication style example above, our critique of someone else's message can also be an example of implicit bias. We are critiquing the way another cultural group prefers to communicate instead of examining our own ability to listen to someone with a different identity and thereby different norms, values, and behaviours.

Of course, bias entails much more than a reaction to someone's communication style. It contains all of the stereotypes and prejudices that we may have unknowingly accepted through our cultural learning. Again, this is not a critique of any one culture, all people hold stereotypes and biases. We have learned them unconsciously from the many subtle (or not subtle) messages we have received in our lifetimes. For example, if our parents do not have a diverse group of friends, as children we "learn" a preference for relationships with people who are like us and are less likely to be open to intercultural dating¹². Or if we are exposed to mainly men in leadership positions, we may be surprised to discover that the woman we meet in a business setting is the supervisor and not the assistant. This surprise reveals our notion of men in leadership as the norm. The surprise itself is not harmful, but if expressed, it can send and reinforce the message that men are the standard for leadership positions. It can also create the impression of lack of support, particularly when it is a sentiment that is heard on a regular basis. Unconscious bias is usually not rooted in hate and may not indicate any negative feelings about another person, but it can work to reinforce patterns of inequality. What was learned unconsciously, must be unlearned with conscious effort.

¹² Martin, J. and Nakayama, T. (2018). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication: An Introduction*. 6th edn. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

What are Microaggressions?

According to Derald Wing Sue, author of *Microaggressions in Everyday Life*, “Microaggressions are the everyday slights, indignities, putdowns, and insults that people of colour, women, LGBT+ populations or those that are marginalised experience in their day to day interactions with people”¹³. They can include casual comments which highlight any defining features of someone from a minority, such as comments about hair, headwear, accents, food preferences, etc. The term micro is not used because the impact is minor, but because they are perceived as minor by the person who uses them. Because they are so common and repeatedly experienced by marginalised identities, the impact of them is significant. There is a cognitive reaction where the person targeted must devote mental energy to decide whether or not to respond in that moment or at all, weighing the potential consequences. This can potentially distract the person or minimise their participation. Additionally, there is an emotional consequence, leading to frustration, anger, or exhaustion¹⁴. In the last few years, there has been an abundance of articles and resources focused on recognising and addressing microaggressions in academia. As an introduction, the University of Washington’s Centre for Teaching and Learning offers the following examples:

- ***Dismissing claims that race was relevant to understanding someone’s experience.***
- ***Ignoring the history and culture of others—assuming others are like you.***
- ***Assuming people don’t speak English well because of their appearance.***
- ***Questioning someone’s membership status in a group. For example, “You don’t look disabled” or “If you were Jewish wouldn’t you do x?”***

Taking the time to learn more about microaggressions is an important step in raising your own awareness.

Not being aware of something like a communication style may seem inconsequential, but for someone from the less represented who uses eye contact in different way, who has a different mode of explaining, or a different relationship to time, lack of awareness may result in discrimination. This may be unintentional. Someone in a job interview may be perceived as less interested in the work because their communication style is more understated than the people

¹³ Wiley (2010) *Microaggressions in everyday life*. 4 October, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJL2POJsAS4&t=62s> (Accessed: 27 April 2021).

¹⁴ Centre for Teaching and Learning—University of Washington. *Addressing Microaggressions in the classroom*. Available at: <https://teaching.washington.edu/topics/inclusive-teaching/addressing-microaggressions-in-the-classroom/> (Accessed: 27 April 2021).

on the interview panel. Or they may be perceived as less serious or professional because their communication style is more emotionally expressive. In a situation like this, being unaware of varying communication styles may lead to a less than fair interpretation of the candidate's performance in an interview.

The term privilege refers to the advantage to a majority cultural group simply from being part of the majority group. For example, white privilege involves not being penalised based on the colour of your skin. Although awareness has recently grown around this issue, a tremendous amount of what comprises privilege and the way we experience it is still in the realm of unawareness. When one cultural group has created the policies for a society, both the conscious and unconscious biases of that group are built into educational settings, the workplace, the healthcare system and every other important aspect of society.

Continuing with the example of communication style, a person who was born into the dominant majority group, whose original communication style is the dominant style in that setting will have an advantage of privilege. Privilege does not mean that they have not worked hard or they are not qualified for a position, it only means they have the advantage of not being penalised for their communication style. Additionally, they do not have to learn a second style and make the effort of adapting to those around them. One level of stress is removed from the setting. When it comes to privilege, again, preference for communication style is only one example. The impact of privilege is seen in incarceration rates—some groups may be unconsciously perceived as more threatening and therefore responded to more aggressively by law enforcement. It is seen in survival rates from serious illness—some complaints of pain are taken less seriously by doctors because of an unconscious perception that some groups (women and ethnic minorities) exaggerate their ailments¹⁵.

The importance of acknowledging that we are all operating from a perspective is crucial to understanding some of the barriers that exist for underrepresented people. When considering intersectionality, in a predominantly white setting, Black women, Asian women, trans* women, disabled women and other intersecting marginalised identities will experience

¹⁵ Tello, M. (2017). 'Racism and discrimination in health care: providers and patients', *Harvard Health Publishing*, 16 January. Available at: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/racism-discrimination-health-care-providers-patients-2017011611015> (Accessed: 14 March 2021).

implicit bias at a greater level. In terms of how power and opportunity are distributed, there is a disparity that needs to be addressed. Awareness is a beginning, but research demonstrates that awareness is not enough to make a difference. Structural and policy changes must be implemented. This guide offers concrete suggestions for beginning this process.

What is privilege?

Privilege is an advantage that a person or group has, usually because of their position.

FALSE

Privilege means your life is easy, that you haven't worked hard, that things were handed to you.

TRUE

Privilege means that while we all experience challenge, some people's challenges are not connected to their race (or other identity).

We agree that whatever we are going through—it should not be because of our race. Being aware of privilege, acknowledging its existence only means that you acknowledge that people are still treated differently based on race.

White Privilege

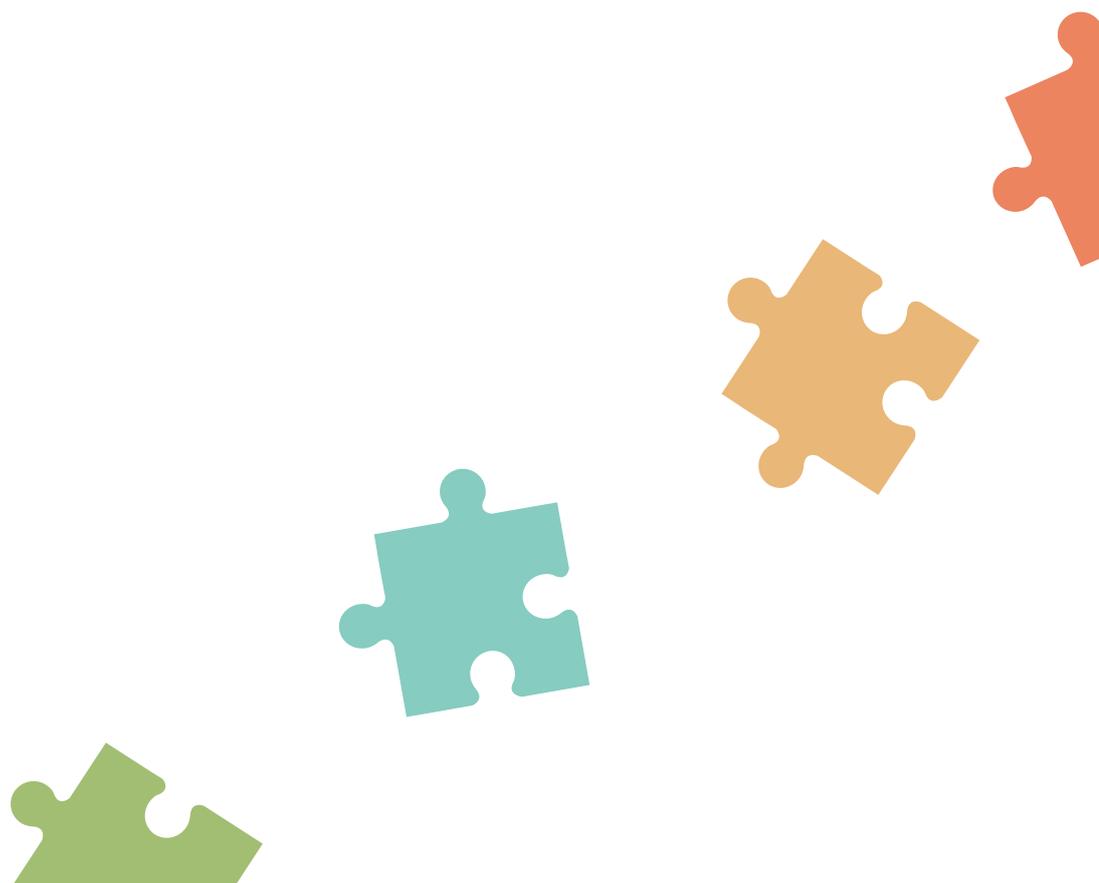
One white student recalls rejecting the notion of white privilege when she first heard the term. She was a single mother, raising a small child without the support of others, meaning it required a tremendous amount of work to just get by. And as a student, finding the time to study while caring for her daughter was a challenge. She didn't feel as if she had an advantage. But after attending a workshop on privilege, she acknowledged that as much as she struggled to meet her goals, she never struggled because of her race. She began to notice the different treatment that other mothers were experiencing when applying for aid. She realised that being part of the dominant culture, she could easily complete the paperwork that was required. Other women visiting the office who spoke English fluently, still had issues with their accents being understood. She felt no judgment on her identity as a single mother, but it seemed to her that mothers from other backgrounds might be experiencing exasperation from the staff because they found it more challenging to help. Her own situation was not easy. But she realised she was experiencing white privilege. Privilege doesn't mean our lives are easy. It only means our struggle is not based on or amplified by our skin colour.

Race in Ireland

A 2010 article notes Ireland's history has complicated its relationship with race, explaining that because the Irish endured colonisation, as well as other hardships, many contemporary Irish people therefore reject the idea that privilege is attached to white Irish identity¹⁶. Privilege is often misunderstood and prompts a defensive reaction, but there is no reason to be defensive about privilege. Privilege is not a critique of individuals it is rather a critique of larger systems. As individual people benefit from privilege, they are generally unaware of it and harbour no negative intention or ill will. But bias and privilege are not unique to any culture and no culture is exempt from it. Looking for the ways in which a system promotes privilege for some and denies it for others is an essential part of discovering how to promote equality. Some will resist by labelling it identity politics, but as Robin DiAngelo, author and lecturer in multicultural education, explains, "All progress we have made in the realm of civil rights has been accomplished through identity politics: women's suffrage, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title 9, federal recognition of same-sex marriage"¹⁷.

¹⁶ Kitching, K. (2010). 'An excavation of the racialised politics of viability underpinning education policy in Ireland', *Irish Educational Studies*, 29 (3), pp. 213-229.

¹⁷ DiAngelo, R. (2018) *White fragility: why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Boston: Beacon Press.





Part 2:

Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Environment

To move toward gender equality in higher education, individuals must increase their awareness, embrace new perspectives, and practice new behaviours. But as intersectionality is about identities relationship to structures and policy, we must also be willing to revise those relationships by changing systems and policies.

The HEA Race Equality report suggests that nearly half of people working in HE in Ireland feel that their workplace is not ethnically diverse¹⁸. Creating an inclusive environment is a first step towards equality. This involves examining the current situation with objectivity and an openness to change. While the current system works for some, the goal is to make it work for everyone. This is not accomplished by asking people whose identities are not to adapt to the system, but to recreate the environment to make it more inclusive. There may be periods of tension and discomfort as individuals let go of the status quo and implement new strategies. This is natural as people learn to communicate in new ways and practice new behaviours. It is also natural to experience resistance to change and backlash to new systems and procedures. Expecting some level of discomfort of change as part of the process, can make it easier to keep moving forward. Research suggests when employees understand the “bigger picture, there can be less resistance to changes”¹⁹.

Most importantly, the new process should include the voices of the currently underrepresented employees and students at your institution. This guide presents strategies for improvement, but the best practices will involve listening and adapting based on the experiences and direction of your people. This guide is meant to help reach the point where those voices are included. The next step will be specific to your situation and come from your own employees and students.

¹⁸ see HEA Race Report pg. 15

¹⁹ CIPD. (2019). DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT THAT WORKS, An evidence-based view. CIPD. Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/7926-diversity-and-inclusion-report-revised_tcm18-65334.pdf (Accessed: 12 May 2021).

Inclusive environments let employees feel comfortable with their identities and valued in the workplace. Even when an organisation has diversity, they may not have a high level of inclusion. When this is the case, the benefits of diversity are not achieved because employees are either uncomfortable making full contributions or their contributions are rejected for being outside the norm.

Additionally, because of negative experiences they have had, many employees who differ from the majority of their colleagues in gender, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity, or other engage in what is known as ‘identity cover’, where they hide important parts of themselves for fear of negative consequences.

Karen Brown, of the diversity and inclusion consulting firm, Bridge Arrow, asks us to picture ‘a Muslim who prays in his car because he doesn’t want to advertise his religion, a mother who doesn’t put up pictures of her children so that coworkers won’t question her commitment to the job, or a gay executive who is unsure whether he can bring his partner to company functions’²⁰.

The more marginalised identities one holds, the greater this concern becomes. Creating an environment that allows people to be true to their identities is socially just and allows universities to receive the benefits of diversity. In order to do so, campuses should focus on ongoing awareness training, policy, and practice.



²⁰ Brown, K (2018). *To Retain Employees, Focus on Inclusion — Not Just Diversity*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2018/12/to-retain-employees-focus-on-inclusion-not-just-diversity> (Accessed: 12 May 2021).

1. Invest in Equality



An institution's values are reflected in its investments. If equality is a goal, it requires an investment.

- Budget for ongoing trainings—creating and maintaining equality is ‘a direction, not a destination’ which requires regular learning, adapting, and practicing of new skills²¹. We will not achieve equality with a training or webinar; it requires a mindset of continual reflection and forward movement. Regular, effective trainings can help reframe perspectives, add new details of understanding, and tools for implementing change.
- Include EDI in all budgets—Under a “Shared Equity” Leadership approach, diversity, equality, and inclusion work is the responsibility of every department, and not just one person or one office²². All departments or organisations who use funds share responsibility. Diversity, equality, and inclusion goals are part of the discussion at budget meetings and built into the department goals.
- Build support for goals—Even with substantial investment, trainings and programmes fail when there is not support for them or they are viewed as unnecessary. Time and energy must be invested in creating the atmosphere that supports financial investments²³.

2. Practice Cultural Humility



Cultural Humility, according to Tervalon and Murray-Garcia, ‘incorporates a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, to redressing power imbalances’ and to developing mutually beneficial and non-patronising partnerships with underrepresented communities²⁴. It differs from the idea of cultural competence in that it emphasises cultural learning as an ongoing process.

²¹ Zamudio-Suarez, F. (2021). *Race on Campus: Bring diversity to your budget meeting*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. Available at: <https://www.chronicle.com/> (Accessed: 21 April 2021).

²² Kezar, A., Holcombe, E., Vigil, D and Dizon, J, P, M. (2021). *Shared Equity Leadership: Making Equity Everyone's Work*. American Council on Education and USC Rossier. Available at: <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Shared-Equity-Leadership-Work.pdf> (Accessed 12 May 2021).

²³ Martin, J. and Nakayama, T. (2018) *Experiencing Intercultural Communication: An Introduction*. 6th edn. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

²⁴ Tervalon, M. and Murray-Garcia, J. (1998) ‘Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education’, *Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved*, 9 (2) pp. 117-125.

While there are many upsides to the notion of cultural competence, one downside is that it is often framed as something to be achieved. When someone attends a training or learns something about another culture, they feel they have accomplished a goal. But as in all relationships, learning something about your partner does not mean the work has concluded. Healthy relationships require consistent learning about the other, consistent self-examination, and consistent evolving in communication and goals. This is the way that cultural humility approaches building equal relationships between communities in the healthcare setting, in the workplace, in schools, and in the home. The following concepts are associated with cultural humility²⁵:

- **Continuous learning** — Cultural humility is a lifelong process.
- **Identity is self-defined** — When someone defines their identity and important concepts for us, we do not correct them or impose our ideas of their culture.
- **Power is balanced** — When a system or procedure benefits a specific group of people, it is revised so that power moves in the direction of marginalised identity.
- **Respectful openness** — We accept another's understanding of their own identity and let them define their needs.
- **Layers of cultural identity** — Recognise that people hold multiple identities and are not reduced to a particular one.

To practice cultural humility, consider the following²⁶:

- **Emphasise curiosity** — Approach interactions with others as an opportunity to learn rather than to display knowledge.
- **Release ego** — Many of our decisions, consciously or unconsciously, are driven by our ego or a desire to 'save face'. Become comfortable letting go of this desire. This can mean admitting you don't know something or, when you are a member of a majority group, remembering that your experience is valid, but it may not be applicable in the moment.

²⁵ Hampton, N. Z. et al (2017) 'Broadening rehabilitation education and research through cultural humility: a conceptual framework for rehabilitation counselling' *Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education*, 31 (2).

²⁶ Hope, L. (2021) 'Cultural humility in the classroom' (Lecture). Elgin Community College. 16 February.

- **Supportive interaction** — Strive to understand other viewpoints.
- **Be aware of biases** — Uncover and reframe any unconscious stereotypes. View others and their experiences as equal.
- **Self-reflection and critique** — Regularly search your opinions and beliefs for bias.
- **Remove judgment from bias** — Unconscious bias exists in all people and is not an indicator of poor character. It indicates lack of awareness which can be remedied. When pointing out bias in others comments or behaviours, do not make it a personal attack. When receiving feedback on an unconscious bias, do not take it as a personal attack. We may be familiar with “calling people out” for bias; it is generally more effective to “call people in”.

Common Misunderstandings

“It’s our job to help.” One common misunderstanding that has a positive intention but a negative outcome is people with privileged identities perceiving equality work as charitable, believing that marginalised people need “help” to achieve it. In reality, it is not an issue of helping anyone, but of no longer participating in a system that is set up in unequal manner.

“That doesn’t affect me.” An opposing perspective from people with privilege is viewing equality work as only impacting people with marginalised identities. Everyone needs and deserves equality and everyone benefits from it. It is the responsibility of all people to participate in creating a more just educational system, workplace, and society.



3. Interrupt Bias



It is well-established that bias exists in people and will be encountered in the workplace. Becoming more aware of it means that it needs to be pointed out. While it may be difficult to give or receive the feedback, it is necessary. The best strategy for interrupting bias depends on the situation and the people involved. Confronting a supervisor versus a coworker might call for a different strategy. Being the person harmed by the bias or a person observing it, also shifts the possible consequences. If you are the person being addressed or if you are the leader who needs to prevent and repair bias, again you must develop a range of strategies and choose accordingly²⁷. Investing in above trainings or facilitated dialogues can offer strategies and insights for how to use them, but speaking up is crucial.

Kim Scott²⁸ founder of Just Work, an organisation that helps organisations create more equal workplaces offers one strategy for distinguishing what type of response you might use to interrupt bias. Scott distinguishes between people who “don’t mean it”, people who “mean” it, and people who are “being mean”.

- “I” Statement—An “I” statement is used in response to someone who doesn’t mean it. The bias is unconscious and the statement intends to be helpful or positive, but it is not. This is the opportunity to raise awareness. For example, if someone consistently asks you as the woman in the room to take notes, rather than asking if someone will volunteer or rotating the task between everyone, you can respond with, “I am especially interested in this topic and can’t contribute in the same way if I always take the notes. Will someone else take notes this week?”
- “It” Statement—An “It” statement is used in response to someone who means it. The prejudicial attitude or statement is expressed with awareness. The person may not intend to discriminate and it may not come from a place of hatred, but the attitude is conscious and results in discrimination nonetheless. For example, if someone says, “Let’s go with someone else. I don’t think someone who wears a hijab has the right look to work at the front desk, we need someone more professional”, you can respond with

²⁷ Scott, K. (2021). Just Work: Get Shit Done, Fast and Fair. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

²⁸ Scott, K. (2021). Just Work: Get Shit Done, Fast and Fair. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

“It is against company policy to make a decision based on religious garb or appearance.”

- “You” Statement—A “You” statement is used in response to someone who intends to be mean. If someone appears to be consciously harassing another person, you can respond with something direct like “You cannot speak to me in that manner”. You may feel it is appropriate to give a direct warning, but make note of the incident and follow the institution’s procedure as necessary. Depending on the incident, it may be necessary immediately in order to prevent further harm.

4. Be Ambitious



Hold serious dialogue and make substantive changes. Show that equality for intersectional identities is a priority rather than a talking point. Decide what is ideal rather than practical, then work toward that.

5. Create Events & Initiatives Focused on Inclusivity



- **Invite more voices** - Host guest lecturers on campus to present on a diverse range of topics.
- **Create opportunities** - Have corporate social responsibility activities and volunteering activities that support intersectionality and inclusion.
- **Solicit feedback** - Ask staff and students for their input and feedback. How would they like to see inclusivity represented in their colleges and universities? Including all voices and then responding to them is crucial to equality.



Part 3:

Strategies for Institutional Hiring

What is Diversity Hiring?

“Diversity hiring is hiring based on merit with special care taken to ensure procedures are free from biases related to a candidate’s age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics that are unrelated to their job performance”²⁹.

Myth: Diversity hiring promotes candidates to meet a quota, lowering standards and hiring underqualified candidates.

Fact: Diversity hiring focuses on identifying and dismantling bias that is built into the system for hiring, giving all candidates a fair and equal chance, regardless of their backgrounds.

“There is an unequal ratio between the number of Black students on the campus to Black academic staff on the campus”³⁰. Most institutions in Ireland now have targets and plans for equality. But even with a plan, change can be slow³¹. When staff remain in positions for long periods of time, this leaves less opportunities for improving gender balance and making meaningful progress in all areas connected to equality. For this reason, the hiring process must be examined and best practices must be applied to every opening. This can slow the process, but it is important to prioritise equality and fairness. Plan for the process to take more time.

There are many aspects be employed during the hiring process from writing the job description, and the person specification, deciding where to recruit and advertise, shortlisting and selecting candidates, selecting the interview board, interviewing, and, finally, selecting someone to fill the position.

²⁹ Mondal, S. (2020). 'Diversity Hiring: 6 Steps to Hiring More Diverse Candidates'. IDEAL Blog. Available at: <https://ideal.com/diversity-hiring/> (Accessed: 3 February 2021).

³⁰ HEA Race Equality report p. 15

³¹ Gender Equality Taskforce. (2018) Accelerating Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions: Gender Action Plan 2018-2020: Report of the Gender Equality Taskforce. Dublin: The Higher Education Authority. Available at: <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2018/11/Gender-Equality-Taskforce-Action-Plan-2018-2020.pdf> (Accessed: 7 July 2020).

1. Job description



Research shows the wording of a job description can either encourage or discourage certain groups of people to apply, particularly when it comes to gender identity³². Additionally, it reinforces a mindset for the people doing the hiring. Wording matters for everyone involved in the process. To both encourage diversity in the candidate pool and to emphasise the most important priorities for the employer, pay close attention to the job description. Consider the following:

- **Limit the number of mandatory qualifications for the job** — According to Iris Bohnet, Academic Dean and Director of Public Policy at Harvard University, “Many women will not apply for a job unless they meet almost all of the listed requirements. Men tend to have a lower threshold for applying”³³. This is not a critique of any person’s approach to applying for the job—it is information that helps a university focused on attracting a larger and more balanced candidate pool. Listing only the absolutely necessary qualifications, accompanied by a range of other potentially beneficial ones invites a wider variety of people to apply.
- **Emphasise skills and experience as well as qualifications** — For certain positions, a particular set of qualifications is crucial. But for many positions, advertising the highest possible qualification, or one that is overly specific, can dissuade appropriate candidates from applying. A specific qualification is valuable and necessary for many positions, but it is not always an indication of experience, performance in a classroom or the ability to carry out other job duties. When it is appropriate, deciding on a range of acceptable qualifications or specialties can broaden the candidate pool.
- **Require experience with diverse or underrepresented populations whenever possible** — This can attract both more applicants who value diversity as well as applicants from a wider variety of backgrounds. For lecturers, advisors, or other appropriate positions, you can make the ability to mentor students from underrepresented groups a requirement.

³² Gaucher D, Friesen J, Kay AC. (2011). 'Evidence that gendered wording in job advertisements exists and sustains gender inequality'. *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 101(1):109-28.

³³ Nobel, C. (2016). 'How to take gender bias out of your job ads', Forbes. (14 December). Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hbsworkingknowledge/2016/12/14/how-to-take-gender-bias-out-of-your-job-ads/> (Accessed 21 January 2021).

- **Highlight existing diversity or commitment to diversity at your institution** — Many candidates are looking for a workplace that values diversity. They may be more willing to apply at institutions that will value their voices and experiences. If they are offered multiple positions, they may choose the organisation where they feel better represented³⁴.
- **Screen for gender coded language in your description** — Job postings emphasising words perceived as more “masculine” attract a higher number of male applicants. Emphasising “feminine” words attracts a higher number of women³⁵. The most qualified candidates may not apply based on the language in the job posting. Keeping descriptions as neutral as possible can boost the number of qualified applicants of all genders. A growing number of free online resources are available to help decode the language in your posting.

How Applicants Respond to Language

- **Consciously:** Applicants may be turned off by the description. While an employer views the process as evaluating potential employees, the applicant is likewise evaluating the institution in terms of what kind of workplace it will be. Applicants may feel negatively about the atmosphere they perceive through the posting. Even if there is nothing offensive in the description, they may be more energised and inspired by the listing of another potential job and put their energy or preference there.
- **Unconsciously:** Applicants may be unaware of that they are influenced by the job description. They may consciously decide they will not apply for the job for any number of reasons, but be unaware that those reasons might have been based on the job description itself. Just as we hold unconscious biases, many of our thought processes are automatic and based on assumptions that we don't give thought to.

³⁴ Mondal, S. (2020) 'Diversity Hiring: 6 Steps to Hiring More Diverse Candidates', *Idea*, 14 September. Available at: <https://ideal.com/diversity-hiring/> (Accessed: 3 February 2021).

³⁵ Stahl, A. (2020) '10 steps businesses can take to improve diversity and inclusion in the workforce', *Forbes*. (21 July). Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleystahl/2020/07/21/10-steps-businesses-can-take-to-improve-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workforce/> (Accessed: 21 January 2021).

Chart 1³⁶

Male Coded Phrases	Better Neutral Wording
We're looking for strong...	We're looking for exceptional...
Who thrive in a competitive atmosphere...	Who are motivated by high goals...
Candidates who are assertive...	Candidates who are go-getters
Female Coded Phrases	Better Neutral Wording
We are a community of concerned...	We are a team focused on...
Have a polite and pleasant style...	Are professional and courteous...
Nurture and connect with customers	Provide great customer service

Chart 2³⁷

Male-Bias Words	Female-Bias Words	More Gender-Neutral Words
Strong	Concerned	Exceptional
Competitive	Nurturing	Motivated
Assertive	Polite	Go-Getter
Ninja	Sensitive	Chairperson (or Chair)
Decisive	Honest	Professional
Leader	Loyal	Courteous
Self-Reliant	Empathetic	Customer-oriented
Chairman	Dependable	Responsible
		Quality

³⁶ Zip Recruiter Editors. (2016) 'Removing these gendered keywords gets you more applicants', *Zip Recruiter*, 19 September. Available at: <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/blog/removing-gendered-keywords-gets-you-more-applicants/> (Accessed: 19 Jan 2021).

³⁷ Rakuna. (2019). *Diversity Recruitment Strategy Guides - Workplace Diversity: What, Why, and How?* Available at: https://www.rakuna.co/blog/posts/diversity-recruitment-strategy-guides#DIVERSE_WORKFORCE (Accessed: 13 May 2021).

2. Recruitment and Advertising



“The percentage of people from minority ethnic backgrounds who live in the wider community are not reflected in employment patterns or positions of authority in either academic or non-academic posts”³⁸. If women and people of colour are not applying for positions, they will not be hired. Paying attention to the job description is an important step, but it must be followed with efforts to recruit with diversity in mind. Institutions must be proactive in their attempts to attract applicants from a wide range of backgrounds.

In 2016, the Harvard Business Review shared that when the short-listed group of candidates for an open position has only one woman or person of colour in the running, they have almost no chance of being hired, statistically speaking. However, having diversity in the final group increases the odds of hiring women or other underrepresented groups exponentially.

Having two women in the short-listed group of candidates improves the chances a hiring a woman by 79 times. Having two racial or ethnic minorities in the group increases the odds of hiring a minority candidate by 194 times³⁹.

It takes effort on the part of the institution, but there are strategies for advertisement and recruitment that boost diversity of the applicant pool. Consider the following:

- **Advertise positions** — Due to time, budget, collective union agreements governing advertising, or preference for an internal candidate, many organisations may not be in a position to publicly post open positions. Posting public announcements where feasible helps to attract a greater number of applicants and diversify the applicant pool. Post positions on your website and advertise with professional organisations.
- **Post in a range of publications** — In addition to your typical listings, advertise in publications that emphasise diversity or cultural awareness.
- **Create a diverse interviewing team** — Having diversity on the interview board can bring

³⁸HEA Race Equality report, p.19

³⁹ Johnson, S.K., Hekman, D. R., Chan, E. T., (2016). *If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired*. Harvard Business Review. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-your-candidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired> (Accessed: 13 May 2021).

new observations, experiences, and strategies to expand traditional recruitment. Additionally, it reminds potential candidates that you value diversity and inclusion, that your practices are in alignment with your stated values.

- **Recruit continuously** — Actively and consistently represent your institution as one that is committed to equality and inclusion. In the case of higher education lecturers or other professionals, build relationships through hosting conferences and events. Being active and building relationships can help to identify candidates for future openings.
- **Encourage referrals** — Contact organisations committed to equality and ask for referrals. They may know someone who is seeking new employment or preparing to begin a job search and can pass along the details of your post.
- **Personalise recruitment** — Call candidates and follow up on communication. Answer questions they have or put them in touch with someone on campus who can answer their questions or discuss concerns they might have.
- **Athena Swan** — Under the Athena Swan process there is specific attention given to institutional recruitment and selection processes. There is scope to enhance the existing higher education engagement with gender equality in this context through also developing actions which demonstrate a commitment to equality based on intersectionality of gender and race.

3. Preparing the Interview Board



Recruitment in Irish HEIs is primarily conducted via interview boards. For some positions it is mandatory to have some or all of the following on the interview board a member of governing body, an academic expert, an industry expert along with the hiring manager and President's appointee. When setting up these interview boards the HR department should consider the following if possible:

- **Interview Boards should be gender balanced** - A minimum of 40% gender balance should sit on each panel.

- **Interview Boards should be diverse** — A panel will benefit from having members with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- **Interview Boards should be trained** — All staff members at an institution should be offered training on cultural awareness and equality, but it is particularly important for members of interview boards to be aware of the benefits that accompany diversity and the biases that prevent movement toward equality.
- **Person Specification** — The Hiring Manager in partnership with HR Prepares a person specification for all posts. Establish consistent, transparent and objective criteria against which to ask questions and to mark. Have a marking scheme in place and ensure all interview board members are aware of the marking scheme and what questions they will be specifically asking. All candidates should ask the same questions, and while some specifications may differ, the same competencies and topics should be covered with each candidate. Include in the person specification questions that demonstrate cultural awareness and flexibility in the candidates. It is imperative that the answers to these questions be ranked and assessed on the same merits as other criteria in the person specification.
- **Fairness and transparency** — Throughout the recruitment and selection process, any conflict of interest be it personal, professional or other relationship with a candidate should be made known the Chair and to the other Board members.

4. Interviewing



Remember, as discussed above, to include questions to measure cultural awareness and flexibility when it comes to equality. Additionally, there are other practices to help make the interview process fairer. In addition to standard practices, consider the following:

- **Special accommodations for candidates** - when inviting candidates to attend for interview, ask if accommodations are required. This will assist in making practical arrangements or reasonable adjustments in advance for candidates with special needs

in relation to the interview location, reserved car parking space room layout or other aspects of the interview.

- **Online interviews** — If the interviews are taking place online, provide candidates with the opportunity to test run their technology in advance to ensure that their laptop/device is compatible, the microphone and camera work and they have sufficient broadband capacity, as well as anticipating any other potential issues. For applicants who do not have broadband access facilities to do remote/online interviews, provide a dedicated space on campus to conduct the interview.
- **Explain the process** — At the beginning of each interview, have the chairperson of the interview board give an overview of the recruitment process, introduce the panel members, outline how long it will be for and reassure the candidate that they will have the opportunity to follow up with questions at the end, also give an overview of next steps, in terms of when they should hear back from HR. By removing ambiguity and signposting them through the process should help the candidate to be a little bit more comfortable and at ease.
- **Note Taking** — Additionally, let them know the interview board will be taking notes for all candidates during the interview, it is not cause for concern.
- **Reserve time after each interview** — Schedule additional time for the interview board to evaluate candidates independently at the conclusion of each post. Do not discuss the candidates as a board until all interviews are completed and evaluations are submitted independently.





Answering Interview Questions:

A few years ago, Robert Sellers, Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion at the University of Michigan, noticed that all job candidates said they valued diversity, but many couldn't answer follow-up questions on the topic. "Now, every finalist for a dean position receives a copy of the DEI plan, along with the institution's budget, student enrolment, and faculty information. That signals to job candidates that they need to prepare concrete ideas about how to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into their potential role at Michigan"⁴⁰. For any institution, it is important to go beyond a token question without follow up. It is crucial to prepare the candidate or to set up the questions to enable reflective answers with specific strategies. Set up questions to seek not just cultural awareness, but cultural humility as well.

⁴⁰ Zamudio-Suarez, F. (2021) 'Race on Campus: Bring diversity to your budget meeting', The Chronicle of Higher Education, 6 April. Available at: <https://www.chronicle.com/> (Accessed: 21 April 2021)



What is Groupthink?

While we view consensus as a desirable outcome, it is only positive when the group has explored multiple perspectives, weighed opposing viewpoints, and engaged in critical thinking toward a solution. Groupthink occurs when a group agrees in order to avoid conflict, meaning an individual may have a concern, question, or even contradicting information, but they remain silent. There are many reasons this may happen: A dominant personality in the group, a non-inclusive atmosphere, or lack of familiarity with how to negotiate conflict productively⁴¹. Groupthink leads to poor quality decision-making and defeats the purpose of having people work together. In the case of a hiring committee, a dominant voice might influence other members, consciously or unconsciously, to avoid sharing their responses. Committee members may agree with a strength that was not originally perceived or they may hesitate to bring forth a concern about a candidate.

In order to counteract groupthink while bringing forward the true benefits of group work, committee members should do independent reflection and evaluation of each candidate. Once the independent work is completed, the committee can come together to discuss the strengths and concerns of each candidate, making sure to consider all viewpoints. While we aim for consensus, a true consensus can be achieved only when differing points of view have been identified, explored, and resolved. This is the true purpose of committee work. It is more time-consuming, but discussion must be prioritised.

5. Selecting the Candidate



It's often said that the 'best person for the job' should be hired, that other considerations are irrelevant. But even when it seems like there is one perfect candidate for a job, if the above guidelines are followed and there is a substantial pool, there is rarely one candidate that is best for the position. There are usually several or even many candidates who could do the

⁴¹ McLean, S. (2018). *Exploring Interpersonal Communication*. 2nd edn. Boston, MA: Boston Academic Publishing.

job well. Recognise that there is not one best person to do the job or one best way to do the job.

- **Resist the notion of ‘best’** — There will rarely be one best person or one right way to approach the job.
- **Relook at organisational and cultural fit** — When there are multiple candidates who seem equally qualified, an interview panel may use organisational fit as a criterion. Who seems like they would fit into the group? However, this does not align well to diverse hiring principles. People with different viewpoints, experiences, communication styles, nonverbal cues are often rejected on this basis. Likability is not required for the job. In fact, increasing diversity often comes with a sense of challenge to comfort levels. Keep the focus on the job criteria, including what the candidate can contribute to students with intersecting marginalised or underrepresented identities⁴².
- **Rank individually** — In addition to completing notes without discussion between committee members, scores should be submitted independently on paper. This provides the opening for discussion. Consider all the insights of the committee before coming to an agreement.
- **Interrupt bias** — When bias is perceived in the discussion, say something. The person may be operating from a place of unconscious bias and welcome the reminder. And even if this is not the case, interrupting bias is required for a just workplace.
- **Be willing to reopen search** — As a reminder, the process should not be rushed. If a candidate does not meet the requirements, including that of experience and understanding of race, gender, and other identities, it may be necessary to reopen the search and expand recruitment.

⁴² CIPD (2019). *DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT THAT WORKS*, An evidence-based view. CIPD. Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/7926-diversity-and-inclusion-report-revised_tcm18-65334.pdf (Accessed: 12 May 2021).



Part 4:

Strategies for Retention

As hiring practices shift toward equality, attention must also be given to retaining employees. Many institutions feel they have succeeded once the staff exhibits more diversity, but they can struggle when it comes to retention. Some universities do achieve a goal when it comes to numbers, but when it comes to the intersectional identities, turnover becomes high and employees report dissatisfaction with the working environment, experiencing it as hostile or toxic⁴³.

Inclusivity is key to retaining employees. Part two of this guide has offered strategies for creating an inclusive environment in the workplace. This section contains additional strategies focused on retaining employees.

1. Emphasise Inclusion



Although achieving diversity is a first step, valuing diversity is what actually leads to equality in the workplace. While an earlier section of this guide discussed inclusivity, the following are some strategies that emphasise inclusion and may contribute to employee retention.

- **Have diversity in management** — This can attract both more applicants who value diversity as well as applicants from a wider variety of backgrounds. For lecturers, advisors, or other appropriate positions, you can make the ability to mentor students from underrepresented groups a requirement.
- **Be available for new employees** — Research indicates managers or senior employees can be more likely to make time and offer advice to newer employees who are like them⁴⁴. This is often a result of unconscious impulses with little awareness that time

⁴³ Brown, S. (2021) 'Race on campus: A 'toxic' campus climate?', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 30 March. Available at: <https://www.chronicle.com/> (Accessed: 30 March 2021).

⁴⁴ Martin, J. and Nakayama, T. (2018). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication: An Introduction*. 6th edn. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

and advice are being directed towards a particular cohort of employees that is in fact exclusionary in practice.

- **Invest in inclusive leadership training** — Representation and mentorship are important, but are more effective with leaders have an understanding of bias, how it works, and strategies for countering it. Believing that you are not biased is not enough, it is crucial to invest in training that has leaders learning on a regular basis and are able to recognise and confront systemic barriers to equality⁴⁵.
- **Train all employees** — When it comes to inclusion, all employees must be trained in how they perform their own duties. Some staff might believe that their position doesn't require cultural or equality training. Regardless of the duties, we all carry implicit bias and may unknowingly be contributing to an unwelcoming workplace. Increasing self-awareness of how we respond to people in our daily interactions or in how our policies or routines might be impacting people with different backgrounds makes a difference⁴⁶.
- **Value underrepresented voices** — Discussion is meaningful when all voices are given opportunities. Not only should the messages of people whose identities are underrepresented in decision making and positions of authority be given the opportunity to share their perspective, they must be taken seriously, and, in many cases amplified. Because their voices are often ignored or undervalued, there is a need for amplification. Remember people know their own experiences better than others, so do not dismiss someone else's experience, particularly someone whose voice is typically silenced or spoken over.



⁴⁵ Jobson, L. (2020). *Five employee retention strategies for diverse workforces*. EW Group. Available at: (Accessed: 20 February 2021).

⁴⁶ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2019) *Diversity management that works: an evidence-based view*. Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/7926-diversity-and-inclusion-report-revised_tcm18-65334.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2021).

Consciously Amplifying Voices

Even in a room where diversity and equality are valued, our unconscious biases can contribute to the devaluing of voices. When President Obama moved into the U.S. White House in 2009, one-third of his aides were women and expressed concern that they had to be aggressive to be included in meetings and once there, their ideas were often ignored or only co-opted later by the men in the room. This was likely unconscious behaviour, but still needed to be addressed. Together the women decided on a strategy they called amplification. “When a woman made a key point, other women would repeat it, giving credit to its author. This forced the men in the room to recognise the contribution — and denied them the chance to claim the idea as their own”⁴⁷. After practicing this strategy for some time, the dynamic of the meetings shifted and women were called upon for their input more often. While it is unfortunate that this may be necessary, conscious strategies are often required to correct unconscious behaviours.

2. Enable Fair Progression



Hiring people without a chance of promotion, particularly in academia, is defeating. To make progression possible, consider the following:

- **Set realistic goals** — Set realistic expectations and give people a chance to achieve them. A lecturer who is expected to be on an above average number of committees because she is a person of colour, will have less time to work on research, for example. If research is a criteria for promotion, she is now at a disadvantage compared to lecturers who do not have an equivalent service workload.
- **Be aware of unequal burdens** — Often employees with underrepresented identities find themselves speaking up on issues related to their identities. Women are expected to speak on gender issues. Ethnic minorities are expected to speak on racism. Not only are they expected to educate others on these issues, they are expected to interrupt bias and reverse the discrimination of others. While the employee may choose to do

⁴⁷ Eilperin, J. (2016) 'White House women want to be in the room where it happens', The Washington Post, 13 September. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com> (Accessed: 19 January 2021).

this speaking, it is only the responsibility of a particular person to participate, share their viewpoint, and educate others to the same extent that it is everyone's responsibility. Employees with marginalised intersecting identities will often find themselves speaking up on gender identity while being asked to serve on every committee connected to diversity and inclusion. They may also become the person others turn to for help in understanding and resolving issues that other employees are experiencing. While it is important to value the voice and viewpoint, it is equally important to support this in a way that keeps it sustainable. Women of colour, in particular, feel the need to work harder to “prove themselves” and combat the perception that they may not have deserved to be hired. They can experience work “burnout” at a higher level than other employees⁴⁸.

- **Value different types of work** — Traditionally, workplaces prioritise or reward certain types of work with promotion or praise. For example, topics that underrepresented faculty members choose for research are sometimes criticised as less significant or applicable. Or publication itself is more rewarded than other work, such as the mentoring of students. Because women of colour or other marginalised identities are viewed as models by students, they are frequently sought out and are compelled to spend more time mentoring students. This is not always visible to their managers and not taken into account in an evaluation, but it strongly influences the experience and success of underrepresented students⁴⁹.
- **Value different cultural norms** — Some of the invisible aspects of culture can impact whether or not we progress in our roles. For example, when an employee engages in a communication style that is different from their manager, they may be judged as less effective and may even be coached to assimilate. In reality, the communication style is not less effective, it is only different. Additionally, while we all value both quality and efficiency in the workplace, some cultures focus more on efficiency and others more quality. The same is true for relationship building versus task orientation, differing relationships to time, and other cultural norms. In responding to others, take into account that there is not one way to effectively complete a task and remove your preference for process from the situation⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Brown, S. (2021). *Diversifying Your Campus*. Washington D.C.: The Chronicle of Higher Education.

⁴⁹ Brown, S. (2021). *Diversifying Your Campus*. Washington D.C.: The Chronicle of Higher Education.

⁵⁰ Martin, J. and Nakayama, T. (2018). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication: An Introduction*. 6th edn. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

3. Provide Flexibility



Keeping schedules flexible benefits all employees, this can be particularly true for women of colour or others who are juggling duties outside work. Not only does flexibility create an inclusive environment, but it allows more fair evaluation of employees. When flexibility becomes the workplace norm, employees are not judged on a timetable, but on their performance. They are not viewed as problematic for asking to take care of their needs.

- **Allow autonomy in planning days** — If a job does not require someone to be present in the office to meet with students or colleagues, consider letting the employee decide when they will take their breaks, if they can arrive early to leave early, or if some work can be accomplished from home.
- **Offering flexibility** — if the job permits, offer flexibility to accommodate religious traditions to be acknowledged that are not marked by bank holidays, or traditional weekend services, explore options for timetabling lectures to be more inclusive.
- **Allow time off** — Employees know when they need time off. Treat this need with respect.

4. Provide Protection from Harassment



Harassment can be the result of unconscious bias or lack of awareness on what can be considered inappropriate. Regular training and ensuring all employees are aware of dignity at work and respect policies and employee codes of conduct can help with prevention. The Employment Equality Act (1998) section 14A (2) places an obligation on employers to be legally responsible for any harassment of employees carried out by co-employees, clients, customers or other business contacts of the employee. While institutions have policies against harassment and procedures for resolving any cases that do come up, the policies and procedures need to be clearly stated, ensuring that employees know who to contact and how to begin the process of resolution.

5. Evaluate and Adapt Consistently



Equality must be both achieved and maintained. The process is continuous and as new information and issues present themselves, they must be resolved. It is important for institutions to implement regular self-evaluations and updates of their plans⁵¹.



⁵¹ CIPD (2021). Factsheet *Inclusion and diversity in the workplace*. CIPD. Available at <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/diversity/factsheet> (Accessed 12 May 2021).

Part 5:

Strategies for Student Success

Achieving equality in higher education includes student experiences as well. When students have multiple marginalised identities, their experience of discrimination, isolation, or hostility on campus is amplified, the same way it is for staff. And in the same way, it is the responsibility of everyone on campus to create an inclusive environment for students in and out of the classroom.

Just as with employees, it is not about helping one student more than another, intersectionality examines the structure and policies of the institution and making changes that balance power between all students. The strategies for achieving equality for students mirror the strategies for equality on campus. As above, ongoing education and adapting to student voices and situations is necessary. There is not one prescriptive list for success, only a starting point for each institution's journey based on their unique student body. Recognising the consequences of intersectionality in the classroom and on campus and acting support it is the foundation for equality.

1. Provide an Inclusive Environment



All members of campus must practice the same strategies for inclusion. From registration and health services to the library and the grounds, staff must practice self-reflexivity when it comes to their interaction with and policies regarding students. Adapt to differing cultural norms and communication styles. Be aware of and interrupt bias directed at students.

2. Create a Culturally Relevant Curriculum



Examine and critique the current curriculum. Seek out the ways in which it promotes cultural biases. Does it present and promote only one viewpoint? Does it include the accomplishments of marginalised intersectional identities? Does it encourage students to challenge conventional ways of thinking? Does it encourage students to challenge themselves? Does it represent marginalised experiences that are not trauma based?

In addition to examining curriculum, there are numerous strategies to engage with students of different backgrounds in the classroom, such as diversifying teaching style and keeping all students informed of resources that may be valuable to them.

3. Provide Mentors and Models for Students



Seeing people who look like them matters to students. Having mentors who amplify their voice and perspective rather than silencing it reinforces to students that their experience is valid and their voice is valued⁵².

4. Practice Cultural Humility



Just as we practice cultural humility with colleagues, we must apply the same principles with students. We can correct information, but not their culture or experience. Each student will be the expert on their own experience and we should approach them with the same sense of curiosity, openness, and respect. This can be challenging as academics are conditioned to present themselves as experts, but remember that intersectionality is meant to rebalance power in relationships⁵³.

⁵² Patel, V. & Field, K. (2021) *Retaining underserved students: strategies for success in a post-pandemic era*. Washington DC: The Chronicle of Higher Education.

⁵³ Hope, L. (2021) 'Cultural humility in the classroom' (Lecture), Elgin Community College. 16 February



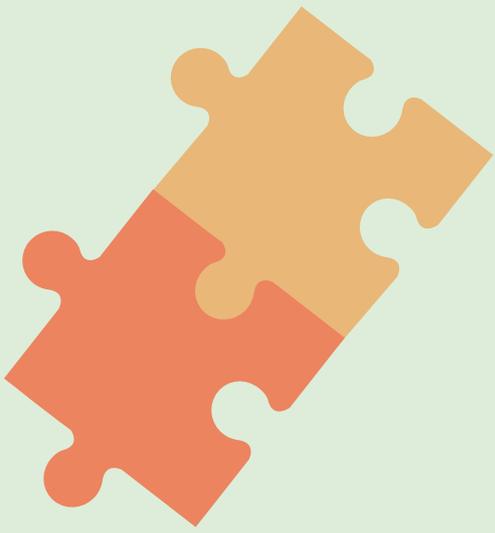
The work for equality does not end. Each year, new students will bring in new experiences and we will adapt to them again. We do not achieve cultural competence, but continue to learn and implement new strategies for connecting and supporting others. For this reason, framing equality as a process rather than an outcome will help maintain a more positive environment.

Students Suggest

Applying intersectionality means creating plans and policies incorporating students feedback as well. When students in the U.S. university system were asked how to support underserved students⁵⁴, they suggested the following:

- Provide students opportunities to network, whether it be through on-campus forums or workshops with professionals, particularly intersecting identities. Anjali DasSarma from the University of Maryland explained, “Students need to see that people like them have succeeded beyond college” when referring to a speakers series on her own campus
- Tiffany Quiñonez of the University of Colorado at Denver suggests providing support for students, such as LGBTQ+ community centers. Students need therapists who are equipped to deal with issues that are specific to underrepresented students on a campus that is predominantly white.
- Matt Bodo from the University of California at Los Angeles emphasises that students sometimes experience crisis and need support in meeting basic needs. He suggests being able to refer students to housing resources, especially emergency housing and considering a food aid program on campus.

⁵⁴ Patel, V. & Field, K. (2021) Retaining underserved students: strategies for success in a post-pandemic era. Washington DC: The Chronicle of Higher Education.



The journey to equality is one that requires constant evaluation and adapting of strategies.



Conclusion

This guide is not comprehensive. It cannot be. The journey to equality is one that requires constant evaluation and adaptation of strategies. Being aware of gender equality and race equality are important, but equality requires an understanding of intersectionality also.

Strive to bring diverse voices into your community, then listen. Dr. Kristina Garcia, co-founder of Career Killing Moves, an organisation that reimagines leadership for women of colour in higher education, offers the following questions to promote equality with an intersectional approach⁵⁵:

- *How else can I educate myself?*
- *Who may be missing from this discussion?*
- *How can I use my position to elevate people's voice without taking over them?*
- *How might this issue or challenge be more complex than I originally believed?*

Garcia emphasises that, "Intersectionality is not a problem to be solved." It is a lens through which to examine equality and help us on our journey forward.

⁵⁵ Garcia, K. (2021) 'All at once: exploring intersectionality in the experiences of women and women of colour in higher education' (Lecture). Elgin Community College. 27 April.



Glossary

Anti-racism: The conscious effort to oppose racism and dismantle the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racism and discriminatory practices. Anti-racism involves active effort. The term developed to emphasise the idea that all people are responsible for responding to discrimination, that being “not racist” only reinforces the status quo.

Bias: A prejudice in favour of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that is considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences.

Cis: Cis, or Cisgender, describes a person whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth.

Critical Race Theory: A framework for examining the appearance of race and racism throughout all aspects in society. Critical race theory explores how culture shapes the way we perceive, experience, and respond to racism.

Cultural Competence: The ability to communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of intercultural settings. There are many more specific definitions, but typically this involves holding an awareness of different cultural norms and communication styles and having the ability to adapt to different cultural contexts. It requires a level of self-awareness related to one’s own cultural communication behaviours, position of power, and impact on others.

Cultural Humility: The viewpoint that cultural competence is not achieved, but a process of continual examination, openness, learning, and adapting.

Culturally Responsive Curriculum: The practice of using cultural knowledge to make teaching more relevant and effective for students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. This involves moving beyond the standard curriculum which typically reflects only the dominant cultural identity in a society.

Equality: Equality can be defined as the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

Equality of opportunity: Equal opportunity, also called equality of opportunity, posits that people ought to be able to compete on equal terms, so by offering the same opportunities to everyone, everyone has a chance to succeed.

Equity: Equity is when resources are shared based on what each person needs in order to adequately level the playing field. In the Social Sciences, this is sometimes known as Equality of Condition.

Gender Equality: The balanced representation and participation of all genders in a society or organisation, with equal value placed on the different behaviours and needs of each group.

Gender Identity: The personal sense of one's own gender. This may or may not correlate with the sex assigned at birth. Gender identity may align with the categories of female and male or not. Some identify as neither male or female (nonbinary), both, or have another expression of gender.

Groupthink: A pattern of agreement in a group that wishes to avoid conflict or challenge, often leading to negative consequences and or less than ideal outcomes due to lack of critical thinking.

Identity: The concept of who we are as an individual. This includes social categories such as race, religion, and gender, as well more individualised notions based on our preferences and experiences.

Implicit bias: Unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that result in discriminatory behaviours and policies. The biases are not only unconscious, but often contrary to conscious or stated beliefs.

Inclusion: The practice of creating an environment that welcomes and values all individuals. This involves recognising the benefits of diversity and shifting policies and practices to ensure marginalised voices are part of conversations and decision-making processes.

Intersectionality: A framework for understanding how people with multiple marginalised identities (particularly women of colour) experience discrimination as a result of imbalanced power relationships in society.

Microaggression: A subtle comment or behaviour, often unconscious and unintentional, that expresses a prejudicial attitude toward a member of a marginalised group.

Privilege: An advantage or immunity held by a person for simply being a member of a group (such as race privilege or gender privilege).

Systemic Discrimination: Policies or patterns of behaviour existing in an organisation or culture that result in disadvantage for people from marginalised identities. This can be intentional or unintentional.

Trans*: An umbrella term for gender identities or expressions that do not correlate with the identity assigned at birth, such as transgender, transsexual, or other identities.

White Supremacy: While the term has a variety of meanings, ranging from the belief of superiority of white racial identity to both overt and subtle discriminatory practices, in the context of this guide, white supremacy refers to any structures or systems which perpetuate, consciously or unconsciously, the preference for dominant cultural norms which devalue and disadvantage people from marginalised racial and ethnic identities.

References

HEA Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector Report

HEA Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

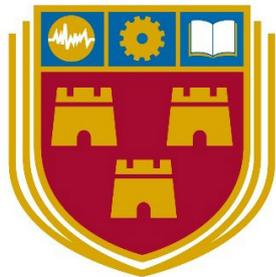
Advance HE Race Equality Charter

Athena SWAN Ireland - EDI Literacy Glossary



CARLOW COLLEGE

ST. PATRICK'S



INSTITUTE *of*
TECHNOLOGY

CARLOW

Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Cheatharlach

