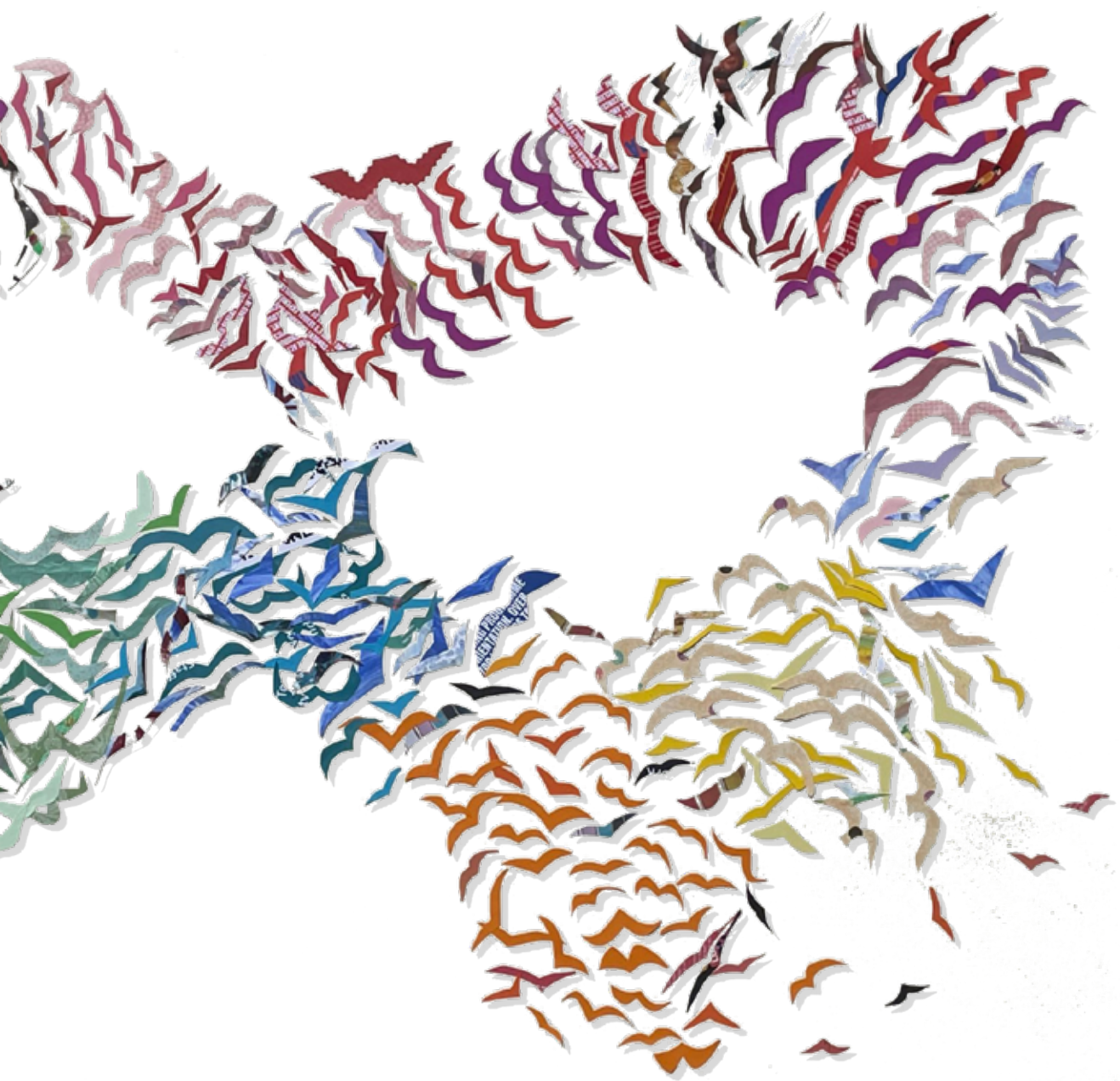# BELONGING AT UCC:

A Strategic Framework
and Action Plan for Equality,
Diversity and Inclusion

2025 – 2028

Rainbow Murmuration artwork created by UCC staff and
students for Cork Pride 2024. Concept by Katarzyna Pyrz

CONTENTS

WELCOME

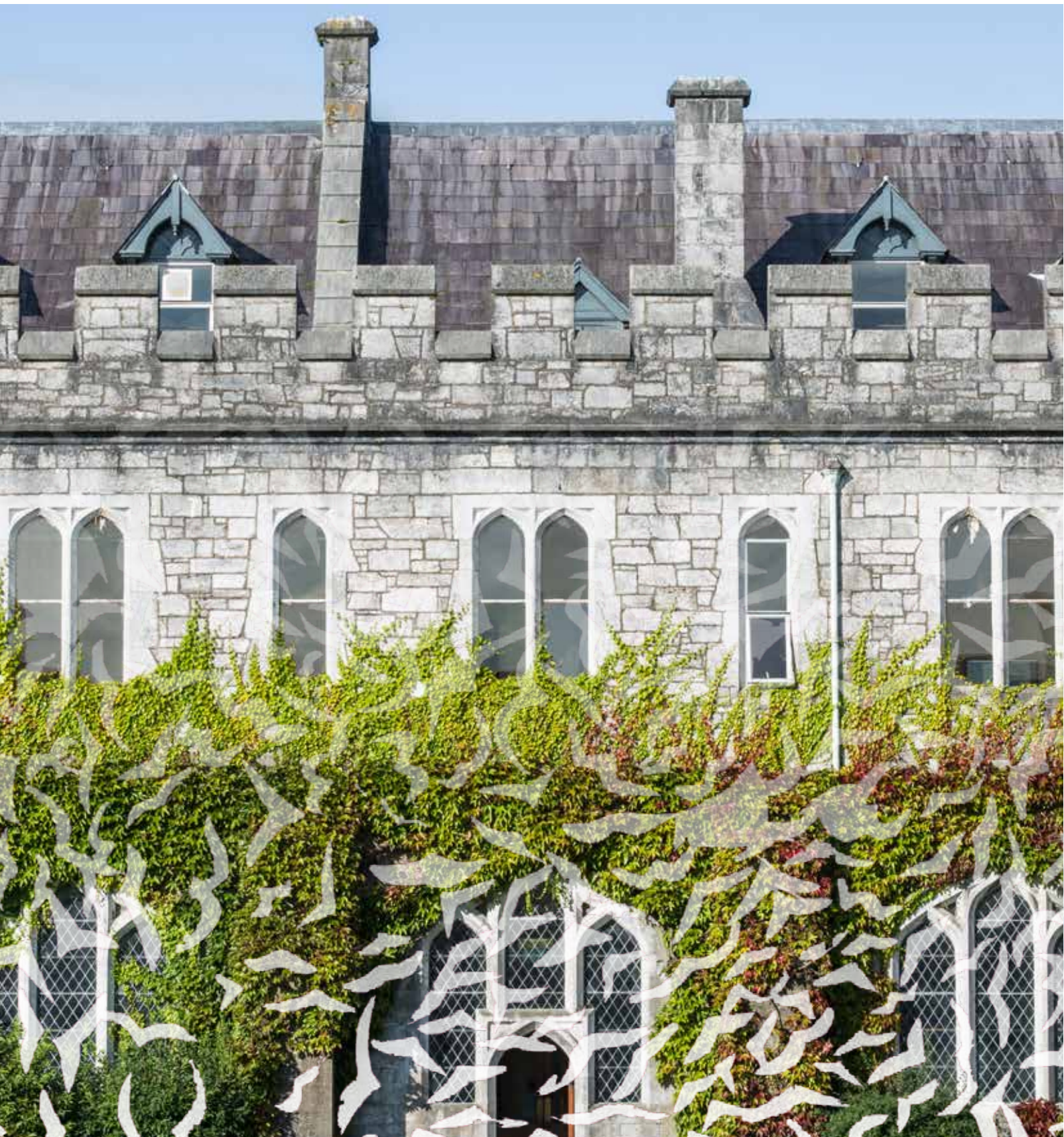# We are delighted to share the first University College Cork (UCC) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Action Plan.

This Framework and Action Plan aligns with Securing Our Future: UCC Strategic Plan 2023-2028 and underpins our university's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). It sets out clear objectives and actions to realise EDI here at UCC over the next four years.

This Framework and Action Plan was informed by a comprehensive Values and Culture/ EDI consultation process which took place in 2022 and again in 2024. The UCC community and its constituent partners who participated in this consultation demanded greater focus on EDI and we listened. As such, this Framework seeks to address responses around the need for culture change; increased transparency; embedding EDI in teaching, learning and research; transformation of our university systems; and a broadening of our institutional commitment to EDI to encompass more fully all equality grounds.

This Framework also builds on the substantive work already taking place across the university under our commitment to the Athena Swan Ireland Charter (2021) and under the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence Framework (2019); National Access Plan for Higher Education Institutions (2022) and Race Equality Implementation Plan for Higher Education Institutions (2023). There is also already a broad range of EDI trainings and policies available to support our staff and students, but we appreciate a more holistic approach to this work is needed.
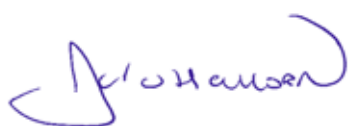
Feeling **a sense of belonging is essential** to ensuring **everyone can reach their potential** & succeed.

We recognise that our university is increasingly made up of a diverse cohort of people with different lived experiences and needs. We want to reflect that richness of community in how we operate and how people feel when they are studying, working and engaging with us on our campus and beyond. We acknowledge that not everyone feels a sense of belonging and that we need to do more to address and eliminate bullying, harassment or discrimination based on the following protected characteristics: Age, Civil Status, Disability, Family Status, Gender, Membership of the Traveller Community, Religion, Race, Sexual Orientation, and Socio-Economic Status. Protecting and supporting the well-being of our staff and students is fundamental to achieving our potential as an organisation.
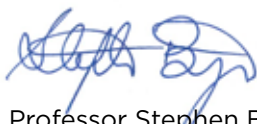
For this Framework to be successful we must make a meaningful commitment to EDI and go beyond compliance. We must ensure that EDI is integral to who we are and everything we do as an organisation now and in the future. We hope that the actions set out here will allow us to achieve this.

We are all responsible for and benefit from equality, diversity, inclusion. We must ensure civility, accountability, dignity and mutual respect are central to all we do; that we create opportunities to lift others up; that we provide equal and equitable opportunities for growth and learning; and establish space for open exchange of ideas. We can only do this important work with the support, participation and engagement of the UCC community. And so, we invite you to commit to and take ownership of this Framework and Action Plan to make it a reality at an individual and local level.

If we all play our part and work together, we can make this ambitious Framework and Action Plan a success, and in turn our university can be a place where everyone feels they belong and can thrive.

Professor John O' Halloran,
President,

Professor Stephen Byrne,
Deputy President and Registrar,

Dr Avril Hutch,
Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
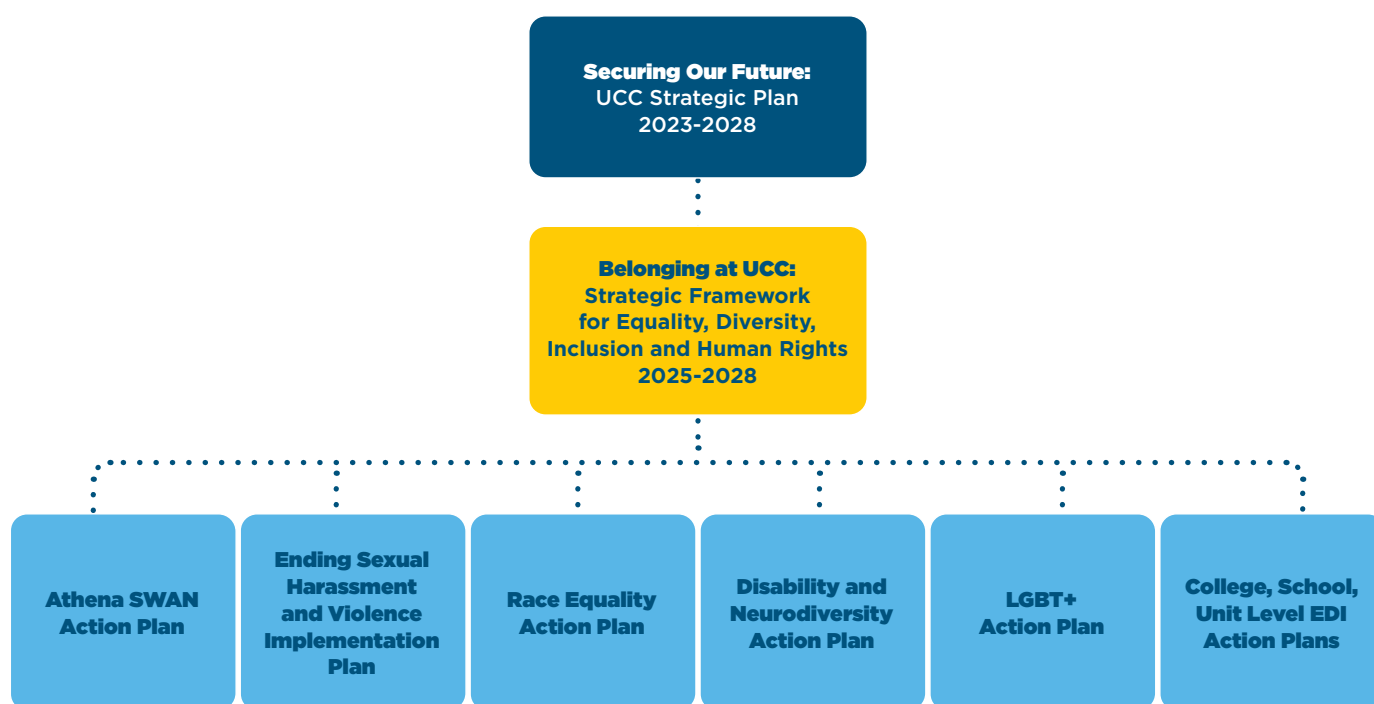
INTRODUCTION

University College Cork is a research based globally orientated university with over 25,000 students, 3,600 staff and 220,000 alumni worldwide. We are a diverse and rapidly evolving community of students, staff, alumni and partners. Our approach to university life must be reflective of this.

Alignment with the UCC Strategic Plan *Securing our Future 2023-2028*

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) are core to the UCC Strategic Plan *Securing Our Future 2023-2028*. The university mission is "to create and sustain an inclusive environment and culture to enable transformative research and learning for the enrichment of society and stewardship of our planet." Our values are represented in the mnemonic CAIRDEAS, the Irish for 'friendship', as they underpin our relationships and engagement with the local and global UCC community and all our partners. Equity is central to this value set. Within the university Strategic Plan, EDI is a strategic enabler, with specific actions set out under each of the five pillars. Begin, Belong, Become is also the theme of the UCC Graduate Attributes Programme.

Alignment with existing Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Work

While UCC has held a long-term commitment to EDI, this is the first EDI Framework and Action Plan for our university. The purpose of this Framework and Action Plan is to build a university community where everyone can develop their own potential and can flourish. This Framework is the first effort to the bring all this work together and compliments existing action plans for Athena Swan, Consent, Race Equality and Disability/Neurodiversity. It also covers broader equality grounds, as set out under international and Irish human rights law.

Securing Our Future: UCC Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Belonging at UCC: Strategic Framework for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights 2025-2028

| Athena SWAN Action Plan | Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence Implementation Plan | Race Equality Action Plan | Disability and Neurodiversity Action Plan | LGBT+ Action Plan | College, School, Unit Level EDI Action Plans |

This EDI Framework is also in alignment with the work already underway through other UCC strategies, frameworks and plans including People and Culture, Staff Welfare and Wellbeing; Research and Innovation: Global Engagement; Access UCC; and Student Experience.

We recognise that this document may evolve over the course of its lifetime and is shaped by the ever-changing world we live in. Under each objective, we have identified cross-institutional priorities that require coordination and alignment across colleges, schools, departments and units. This Framework is not an exhaustive list of EDI actions being pursued at UCC. The listed targets are drawn from our current strategies and plans, with actions highlighting how we will meet these targets. As we further develop our EDI programme, work will be carried out to develop new targets in line with our ambitions.

Consultation

A comprehensive Values and Culture/ EDI survey issued to all staff in March 2022 and March 2024. Over 1600 staff (46% response rate) contributed to this consultation process which helped to identify priority areas for progress and development in EDI. Sixty-four staff participated in focus groups in 2022, while another thirty-eight staff attended a dedicated roundtable event in 2024 (invited through an open call to all staff). A separate consultation was also held with the Chairs of EDI staff networks. Over one hundred staff also participated in one-to-one interviews.

Two EDI student surveys also issued in 2022 and 2024 with over 1500 providing input to this process. The UCC Student Union was consulted as part of this process.

We also engaged with alumni and external stakeholders across other higher education institutions (HEIs) and the public and private sector to ensure this ambitious framework and action plan is benchmarked and in line with national and international best practice.

OUR APPROACH

The approach to our EDI work is outlined below:

Public Sector Duty

As a pilot site of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in Ireland in 2018, our Framework is based on the approach set out under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.

All public bodies in Ireland have responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the rights of everyone affected by their policies and plans. This means that there is an ongoing obligation that will be developed, reviewed, and monitored as part of the university's broader strategic planning, implementation and reporting cycle.

Figure 1: **Public Sector Duty Process**

Data Informed

We will develop our EDI actions based on comprehensive data from and related to our staff and students. Confidentiality and establishing/ maintaining trust will be fundamental to this work. We will analyse and measure impacts of key interventions against our dataset and share progress with our staff and students on an EDI dashboard and through regular reporting to our EDI Committees and functions.

Intersectionality and Diversity of Lived Experiences

We aim to represent a diversity of lived experiences and perspectives which is reflective of our university community. We want to make sure the actions set our here are meaningful and have the impact intended. The objectives and actions set out here are informed by our staff and students. Equally, we want to ensure a diverse leadership is involved in implementation of this Framework and Action Plan.

Academic Freedom and Free Speech

As a university, academic freedom, free speech and inquiry is fundamental to our EDI work. We recognise that individuals may not always agree and welcome diverse points of view. We encourage thoughtful discussion and investigation so that we might learn from one another in a safe, respectful and collegiate way.

UNDERSTANDING THE EQUALITY GROUNDS

This Framework and Action Plan is set against ten equality grounds, informed by legal protections.

1. **Age**
   A person's age (this does not apply to a person aged under 16)

2. **Civil Status**
   A person's civil status be it single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnered and formerly civil partnered

3. **Disability**
   Includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions.

4. **Family Status**
   Family being a parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability.

5. **Gender**
   A person's gender identity including male, female, transgender or non-binary.*

6. **Membership of the Traveller Community**
   Recognised as an ethnic group.

7. **Race**
   Includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

8. **Religion**
   A person's religious belief, background, outlook or none.

9. **Sexual Orientation**
   A person's sexual orientation including but not limited to gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual.

10. **Socio-Economic Status****
    A combined economic and sociological measure of economic and social position in relation to others, based on the income, education, and occupation of an individual and their family.

This encompasses cisgender and transgender identities.

***There are nine protected equality "grounds" under Irish law. UCC also includes Socio-Economic Status as a tenth ground. This is not currently covered under Irish legislation.*

| DEFINITIONS & GLOSSARY

Belonging

Belonging means that everyone is treated and feels like a full member of a larger community and can thrive.

Discrimination

According to the Equal Status Acts, discrimination is defined as occurring where a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any one of "nine grounds".

Diversity

Diverse means different. Diversity is what makes each of us unique and includes our background, personality, life experiences as well as specific characteristics. Diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing differences based on our personal characteristics and other aspects of ourselves.

Equality

Equality is about fairness, about treating individuals or groups of individuals fairly. Equality is provided for in legislation through the Employment Equality 1998 - 2015 / Equal Status Acts 1998-2018 and ensures that individuals are not treated less favourably, based on their protected characteristics/equality grounds. Equal treatment assumes that everyone benefits from the same support when they are treated equally.

Equity

The concept of equity means that when people are treated equitably, individuals are given different supports based on what they need. To ensure equitable outcomes, the barriers causing inequity need to be removed.

Human Rights

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to everyone. International law, including treaties, contain the provisions which give human rights legal effect. The United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Declaration sets out for the first time the human rights and fundamental freedoms shared by all human beings without discrimination of any kind.

Inclusion

Inclusion means building a culture based on fairness and respect, value and belonging, safety and openness, and empowerment and growth.

Positive Action

Under the Acts, 'positive action' means that the employer can take steps that are not required under the law to promote equality for all their workers. In particular, employers can take positive action measure in relation to the gender ground, people over 50, people with disabilities and members of the Traveller community.

Source: Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission 2024

EDI VISION

To embed a commitment to and **culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion across our university** so that **everyone feels a sense of belonging** and can thrive.

EDI MISSION

Working together with the UCC community to **promote, advance and progress the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging** and embed it within our practice and culture in a meaningful way.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following five objectives set out our priorities as we strive to realise our EDI ambitions.

They focus on five areas of university life:

Foundation
Building EDI leadership and organisational commitment

To affirm an institutional commitment to equality for all which is fostered through collaborative leadership and decision-making, organisational resources and shared accountability for EDI.

Culture
Ensuring an inclusive, respectful and safe environment

To ensure UCC is a safe and welcoming community where everyone feels they belong. Support perceptions and experiences of UCC that are inclusive and supportive of students, staff and visitors.

Success
Providing access to opportunity and achievement

To ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes so that all staff and students can individually and collectively reach their potential.

Growth
Enhancing education, research and scholarship

To build knowledge and skills to enhance inclusive curriculum, scholarship and research which is reflective of diverse groups, identity, experience and cultures.

Engagement
Understanding and working with our community

To enhance partnerships and internal/external community engagement based on shared values and motivation for the betterment of society.

OUR STAKEHOLDERS

The below sets out who the key stakeholder the EDI Strategic Framework and Action Plan aims to reach:

Wider Society

External Stakeholders:
Policy makers in Government, international organisations, civil society, private sector

UCC Community:
Students, staff, alumni, their families & friends

Individuals

UCC Framework for EDI
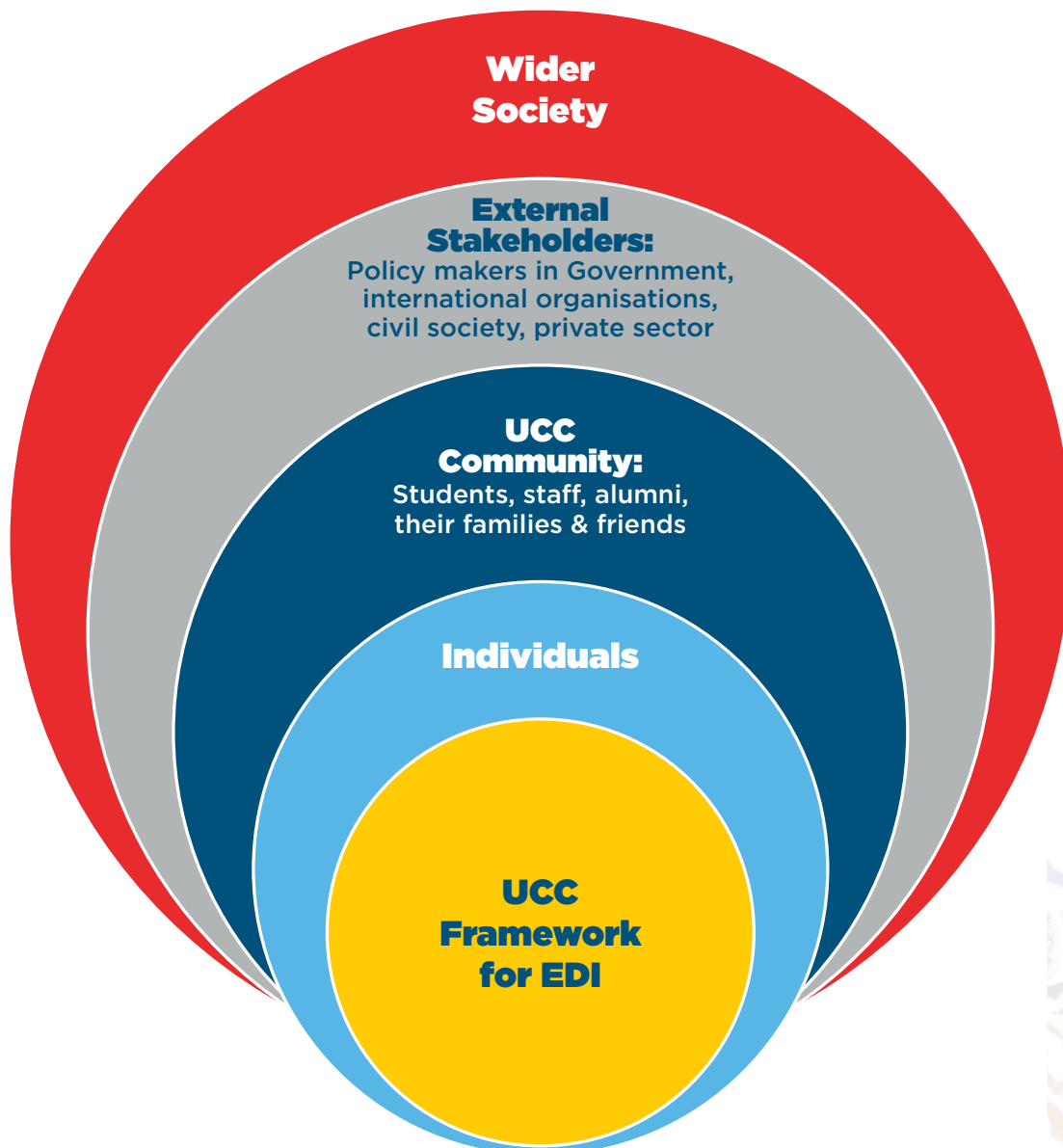
OBJECTIVES

FOUNDATION: Building EDI Leadership & Organisational Commitment

STRATEGIC AIM

To affirm an institutional commitment to equality for all which is fostered through collaborative leadership, organisational resources and shared accountability for EDI.

TARGETS

- Strengthen EDI leadership across the university.
- Develop new EDI governance and reporting structures based on Values & Culture/ EDI consultation process.
- Identify opportunities for investment and income generation through EDI.
- Ensure EDI is central to key university review and management systems.

ACTIONS

1. Establish a new EDI Sub-Committee of the University Leadership Team (ULT).
2. Develop EDI Champions Network across key schools/departments and units.
3. Appoint Vice-Deans for EDI across the four colleges.
4. Achieve Athena Swan Silver Institutional Award.
5. Appropriately resource EDI through core internal funding. Capitalise on external funding opportunities and community fund-raising to deliver EDI programmes.
6. Embed EDI as a core pillar of the UCC quality assurance process.
7. Embed EDI as a core pillar of the institutional audit process.
8. Identify areas for digitisation and automation within EDI.
9. Expand capabilities of the EDI Data Hub and develop a dedicated EDI dashboard.
10. Develop an EDI toolkit to support leaders and unit level decision makers.
11. Develop EDI impact assessment for institutional policy and practice.

OBJECTIVE 2:
CULTURE: Ensuring an Inclusive, Safe & Respectful Culture

STRATEGIC AIM

To ensure UCC is a safe and welcoming community. Support perceptions and experiences of UCC that are inclusive and supportive of all students, staff & visitors.

TARGETS

- Further embed EDI principles to enhance student experience.

- Prevention of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and violence.

- Increased focus on People & Culture/Human Resources to advance UCC culture and EDI ecosystem.

ACTIONS

1. Develop and launch a dedicated EDI Policy and Statement for students and staff.

2. Develop a new professional value-based behavioural framework for staff to foster an inclusive working environment.

3. Scope establishment of independent dignity and respect/report and support hub for students and staff.

4. Implement HEA Consent Framework, including UCC Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure and associated supports for students and staff.

5. Implement HEA Race Equality Action Plan for students and staff.

6. Enhance supports and accommodations for disability and neurodiversity.

7. Enhance supports for older students and staff and achieve Age Friendly University accreditation.

8. Develop a framework for students and staff who are carers.

9. Establish annual EDI awards scheme for students and staff.

10. Hold annual EDI Gathering – a forum with students and staff to consult on EDI actions.

11. Increase response rate to bi-annual Values & Culture/EDI Consultation with students and staff, and share returns to ensure transparency and accountability.

SUCCESS: Providing Access to Opportunity & Achievement

STRATEGIC AIM

Ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students and staff

TARGETS

- Advance the embedding of Universal Design principles to enhance the student experience and ensure accessibility and inclusivity across all learning environments.

- Advanced recruitment and supports for staff to ensure people from all backgrounds are attracted to work/retained at UCC.

- Increased resourcing and supports for existing staff development and support.

ACTIONS

1. Develop new EDI training programme for all students and staff.

2. Expand the use of accessibility auditing software, Anthology Ally, on the Virtual learning Environment (VLE) to improve the accessibility of course materials.

3. Expand the adoption of the UCC Accessible VLE template to ensure a consistent student experience and a more inclusive, accessible course design.

4. Renew University of Sanctuary accreditation to consolidate and further embed Sanctuary in UCC.

5. Ensure EDI is embedded in staff recruitment and induction processes.

6. Ensure inclusion of EDI criteria in new staff performance review and career development process.

7. Develop/implement a dedicated Staff Wellbeing Framework and Action Plan.

8. Develop a dedicated Work Life Balance Policy to support blended/flexible work for staff.

9. Undertake dedicated EDI consultation with research and research support staff to generate a baseline profile of understanding and practice of EDI in research and innovation.

GROWTH: Enhancing Education, Research & Scholarship

STRATEGIC AIM

Strengthened EDI knowledge and skills which will enhance inclusive curriculum, scholarship and research and is reflective of diverse groups, identity, experience and cultures.

TARGETS

- Enhance knowledge and understanding of EDI among UCC students and staff.

- Further develop staff capacity in digital accessibility for teaching, learning, and assessment to enhance inclusive education practices.

- Gain a better understanding of how UCC research impacts EDI outcomes and communicate this more widely.

- Develop an approach for measuring and reporting on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 & 10 (leveraging both the Time Higher Education World University Impact Ranking; QS Sustainability Ranking).

- Promote UCC as a place where all identities and cultures are celebrated, and intercultural understanding is advanced in line with our values and behaviours.

ACTIONS

1. Establish EDI Centre of Excellence for Curriculum, Research and Innovation to coordinate and execute EDI training and education.

2. Develop an EDI micro-credential and coordinate a university-wide interfaculty initiative to bring courses that relate to EDI together in one offering.

3. Continue to demonstrate good practice and enhance inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

4. Rollout of a Universal Design Badge for Professional Services and Managerial Staff (PMSS).

5. Continue to support digital accessibility through provision of staff development offerings.

6. Continue to demonstrate good practice and enhance teaching and learning, curriculum planning and assessment from an EDI perspective.

7. Undertake review of First Year Inclusive Assessment across undergraduate programmes in four colleges.

8. Develop and implement data management process for SDG 5 and 10.

9. Establish an annual EDI Early Career Grant Scheme for academics, researchers and practitioners from under-represented groups.

10. Encourage scholarship on inclusive teaching, learning and assessment.

11. Develop and launch training for staff and students on intercultural competence and multiculturalism.

ENGAGEMENT:
Understanding & Working with Our Community

STRATEGIC AIM

To enhance partnerships and internal/external community engagement based on shared values and motivation for the betterment of society

TARGETS

- Enhance relations with the informal EDI community/grassroots network to support, work together and stand in solidarity.

- Engage with our suppliers/vendors to better understand EDI and to support them to develop their own EDI strategies/statements.

- Engage with the Sustainability Office to ensure EDI and just transition is central to all SDG work so that those most impacted by climate change are considered.

- Ensure EDI is a cross-cutting theme in institutional communications and marketing plan.

ACTIONS

1. Continue to work in partnership with and resource staff networks (LGBT+, Mná, Race Equality, Disability & Neurodivergence, Carers).

2. Engage with the HEA to develop LGBT+ national action plan and corresponding reporting.

3. Establish new Parents and Age Friendly staff networks.

4. Engage and partner with Student Union Equality Committee in delivery of EDI programme of work.

5. Develop and share EDI training and toolkits with UCC student clubs, societies and staff networks.

6. Develop and deliver a human rights framework for UCC external suppliers/vendors.

7. Organise and host national conference for EDI at UCC.

8. Create and deliver a cohesive communications and marketing framework for UCC which includes an EDI proofed internal communications action plan.

9. Develop and implement an EDI events calendar, with an annual platform event around EDI Week.

OUTCOMES

**Below are the intended outcomes of our EDI Framework
and Action Plan 2025-2028:**

FOUNDATION

- Enhanced EDI leadership and governance.
- Optimised investment in EDI.
- Increased accountability related to EDI.

CULTURE

- Embedded culture of mutual respect.
- Increased transparency.
- Improved student and staff morale.
- Improved data on university/college/school/unit level EDI progress.

SUCCESS

- Equitable opportunities and outcomes for students and staff.
- Academic, research and professional staff integration.
- Diverse talent attraction and optimisation.
- Improved job satisfaction

GROWTH

- Increased understanding and awareness of EDI among staff and students
- Inclusive excellence in teaching, learning and research.

ENGAGEMENT

- Ongoing and improved dialogue within and beyond the UCC community.
- Increased trustworthiness and transparency.
- Improved responsiveness to EDI matters within the university community.

OVERSIGHT, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Governance

To support the delivery of this Framework and Action Plan, we will introduce a comprehensive new governance structure for EDI. This includes a dedicated Governing Authority Sub-Committee on People, Culture and EDI (established in August 2024) and a University Leadership Team Sub-Committee for EDI (will be established in December 2024). Both these Committees will meet four to six times per annum. It will also comprise four working groups for Athena Swan; Ending Sexual Harassment & Violence; Disability & Neurodivergence; and Race Equality.

The Director of EDI (within the remit of the Office of the Deputy President and Registrar) and EDI Unit team lead on the development and delivery of the EDI Framework across UCC, working with ULT and wider partners in support of the university Strategic Plan. They lead and oversee the university's implementation of the Public Sector Duty, Athena Swan, wider EDI reporting to the HEA and raise awareness amongst all staff to fulfil their responsibilities to comply with UCC's regulations, policies and procedures. They provide high-level guidance on EDI and work collaboratively with colleagues across the organisation to increase engagement and understanding of EDI and work to embed the principles and culture of EDI in every aspect of the university's work.

Access UCC collaborates with community partners to deliver outreach programs that attract diverse students and uses a student lifecycle model to provide support at every stage, from entry to graduation and beyond. By offering alternative admissions routes, UCC addresses barriers for underrepresented groups, including socio-economically disadvantaged students, the Traveller and Roma communities, and students with disabilities. These efforts are designed to promote access, retention, and success throughout the student journey.

Mainstreaming EDI into our policies, practices and decision-making is one of our core objectives. This will be supported by the establishment of a university-wide EDI Champions Network and appointment of four Vice-Deans of EDI across the four colleges.

We also work in partnership with the college and unit level EDI Committees, EDI staff networks, the UCC Student Union, and EDI related student societies to realise the ambitious plan set out in this framework and action plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An EDI Framework Implementation Group will be established to support delivery of the actions set out in this Framework. This group will convene a minimum of four times per annum.

The EDI staff and student surveys will be issued every two years to ensure we assess impact and identify new areas of EDI work.

We will share monthly progress reports through the EDI newsletter/EDI website, on a new EDI dashboard and in the EDI Annual Report.

An external review of the EDI Framework and Action Plan will take place in 2028.

APPENDIX
Targets and Measure of Progress by Objective

Objective 1: FOUNDATION: Building EDI Leadership and Organisational Commitment				
No	**Action**	**Measure of Progress**	**Timeframe**	**Action Owner**
1.1	Establish a new EDI Sub-Committee of the University Leadership Team.	New EDIB Sub-Committee for EDI convened/representative of UCC community to oversee and support implementation of EDI Framework and Action Plan. Working groups for Athena SWAN, ESVH, Race Equality and Disability/Neurodiversity established.	Q4 2024	President; Deputy President and Registrar; Director of EDI
1.2	Develop EDI Champions Network across key schools/ departments and units.	EDI Champions Network developed. EDI training and toolkits provided to EDI Champions. Recognition of contribution to EDI embedded in promotions and performance management schemes.	Q2 2025 onwards	Director of EDI
1.3	Appoint Vice-Deans for EDI across the four colleges.	Vice-Deans for EDI appointed across all four Colleges.	Q1 2025	Heads of College
1.4	Achieve Athena SWAN Silver award.	Athena SWAN Silver award achieved.	Q3 2025	Deputy President and Registrar; Director of EDI
1.5	Appropriately resource EDI through core internal funding and capitalise on external funding opportunities to deliver EDI programmes.	% funding increase for EDI through core and external funding streams.	Ongoing	Deputy President and Registrar; Chief Finance Officer; Director of Alumni & Development
1.6	Embed EDI a core pillar of the UCC quality assurance process.	EDI metrics agreed and embedded into quality assurances reviews of college, school, department, units.	Q1 2025 onwards	Director of Quality Assurance
1.7	Embed EDI as a core pillar of the institutional audit process.	EDI metric and guidelines included in institutional audit process.	Q2 2025 onwards	Head of Internal Audit
1.8	Identify areas for digitisation and automation within EDI.	Audit of EDI implementation and identification of EDI areas which can be digitised or automated.	Q1 2025 onwards	Digital Advisory Centre; Director of EDI

Objective 1: FOUNDATION:
Building EDI Leadership and Organisational Commitment

1.9	Expand capabilities of the EDI Data Hub and develop dedicated EDI dashboard.	Re-imagined EDI Data architecture and interface developed and launched. EDI voluntary disclosure campaign undertaken annually to enhance EDI data collection.	Q1 2025 onwards	EDI Data Analyst; Human Resources Information Systems; Director of IT
1.10	Develop an EDI toolkit to support university leaders and unit level decision makers in intentionally considering EDI as part of their decision-making processes.	EDI decision making tool kit developed. Inclusion of toolkit on agenda template of key decision-making bodies. Training for chairs of relevant decision-making committees/ groups.	Q1 2026	Director of EDI; ULT members; HR Employee and Development Services
1.11	Develop EDI impact assessment for institutional policy and practice.	EDI impact assessment developed and implemented to show impact of policies/ practices on different groups of staff and students. Identification of potential issues and action planning related to EDI integrated to policy and practice.	Q2 2026	EDI Policy Review Group; HR Employee and Development Services

Objective 2: CULTURE:
Ensuring an Inclusive, Safe and Respectful Culture

No	Action	Measure of Progress	Timeframe	Action Owner
2.1	Develop dedicated EDI Policy and Statement for Staff and Students.	UCC EDI Policy and Statement launched/ implemented.	Q4 2025	Director of EDI; Policy Review Group
2.2	Develop a new professional behavioural framework for staff which translates our university values and culture to foster an inclusive working environment.	Professional behaviour framework developed and implemented. Integrated to staff induction process and relevant learning and development initiatives for leaders and managers.	Q4 2025 Q1 2026	Chief People and Culture Officer; HR Employee and Development Services
2.3	Scope establishment of independent dignity and respect/report and support hub.	Scoping exercise completed. Adequately resourced independent UCC Report and Support Hub established to support and guide all staff and student complaints/requests for support.	Q1 2025 – Q2 2027	Deputy President and Registrar; Director of EDI; Chief People and Culture Officer, Corporate Secretary

2.4	Implement HEA Consent Framework, including UCC Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure and associated supports for staff and students.	HEA Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment (ESVH) Action Plan, including implementation of Sexual Misconduct Policy implemented.	Q1 2025 – Q3 2025	Deputy President and Registrar; Chief People and Culture Officer; Director of EDI; ESVH Manager; Bystander Intervention Programme
2.5	Implement HEA Race Equality Action Plan for staff and students.	Actions set out HEA Race Equality Action Plan implemented.	Q1 2025 – Q4 2028	Director of EDI; Race Equality Network
2.6	Enhance supports and accommodations for disability and neurodiversity.	Disability and Neurodiversity Action Plan for Staff developed/implemented. Irish Sign Language Policy launched.	Q1 2025 – Q4 2028 Q3 2025	Director of EDI
2.7	Enhance supports for older staff.	Achieve Age Friendly University accreditation.	Q1 – Q4 2026	Director of EDI
2.8	Develop a framework for staff and students who are carers.	Review Carers' Leave Policy and related wrap around supports. % increase satisfaction rate on supports for staff who are carers.	Q1 – Q4 2026	Director of EDI; Carers' Network
2.9	Establish EDI awards scheme.	Annual EDI awards scheme established for staff and students – individual and unit level.	Q3 annually	Director of EDI
2.10	Establish annual EDI Gathering.	Annual EDI Gathering held – a forum for staff and students to consult on EDI actions.	Q2 Annually	Director of EDI
2.11	Undertake bi-annual Values & Culture/EDI Consultation with staff and students.	50% response rate from staff and >5% response rate from students with EDI consultation process. Consultation results and recommendations published to ensure transparency and accountability.	Q3 2026; Q3 2028	Director of EDI; EDI Data Analyst; OCLA

Objective 3: SUCCESS:
Providing Access to Opportunity & Achievement

No	Action	Measure of Progress	Timeframe	Action Owner
3.1	Develop new EDI training programme for all staff and students.	New mandatory online EDI training programme developed/launched for all staff on workwiz. % completion rate.	Q1 2026 – Q2 2027	Director of EDI; Director of IT; Director of Enterprise Risk Management
3.2	Expand the use of Accessibility auditing software, Anthology Ally, on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to improve the accessibility of course materials.	VLE (Canvas) content accessibility score to increase.	Q1 2025 onwards	Deputy President and Registrar; Inclusive UCC Manager
3.3	Expand the adoption of the UCC Accessible VLE template to ensure a consistent student experience and a more inclusive, accessible course design.	Establish the UCC Accessible VLE template as the default for all new modules.	Q3 2025 onwards	Deputy President and Registrar; Inclusive UCC Manager
3.4	Ensure EDI is embedded in staff recruitment and induction processes.	Increased number of staff from minority and underrepresented backgrounds.	Q1-Q2 2026	Chief People and Culture Officer; Recruitment Manager
3.5	Ensure inclusion of EDI criteria in new staff performance review and career development process.	EDI criteria and measurement of same embedded new staff performance review and career development process.	Q4 2025	Chief People and Culture Officer; HR Employee and Development Services
3.6	Develop a dedicated work life balance policy to support blended/flexible work for staff.	Work Life Balance Policy launched.	Q2 2025	Chief People and Culture Officer
3.7	Develop a dedicated Staff Wellbeing Framework and Action Plan to embed a culture of staff wellbeing across the University in the development of systems, policies and resources to improve overall staff experience.	Staff Wellbeing Framework and Action Plan developed/launched with a data informed approach to continually improve and adapt wellbeing initiatives. Annual assessments to evaluate staff wellbeing completed.	Q3 2025	Chief People and Culture Officer; HR Employee and Organisational Development
3.8	Renew University of Sanctuary accreditation to consolidate and further embed Sanctuary in UCC.	Renewal of University of Sanctuary accreditation. % increase of Sanctuary scholarships. Identification of relevant long-term funding streams.	Q1 2025 Q3 2025 onwards Q3 2025 onwards	VP Global

3.9	Undertake dedicated EDI consultation with research and research support staff to generate a baseline profile of understanding and practice of EDI in research and innovation.	% increase in research and research support staff engagement with EDI consultation. Identification of EDI areas of support for researchers through consultation and benchmarking and dedicated EDI Research Forum. Expansion of EDI understanding among researchers and research support staff. Development of appropriate EDI tools that will empower researchers and research support staff to embed EDI into everyday practice to create (a Research Culture) change.	Q2 2025; Q2 2027	VP Research & Innovation; Director of EDI

Objective 4: GROWTH:
Enhancing Education, Research & Scholarship

No	Action	Measure of Progress	Timeframe	Action Owner
4.1	Establish EDI Centre of Excellence for Curriculum, Research and Innovation to coordinate and execute EDI training and education.	All staff undertaking teaching and research related to EDI brought together and UCC EDI Centre of Excellence for Curriculum, Research and Innovation established.	Q1 2026 onwards	Deputy President and Registrar; Director of EDI; VP Research & Innovation;
4.2	Develop EDI micro-credential and coordinate university-wide interfaculty initiative to bring courses together that relate to EDI in one offering.	Five credit EDI micro-credential launched for staff. % completion rate by staff. Potential to later offer to industry at cost.	Q1 2025 -Q2 2026	Director of EDI; Deputy President and Registrar; MicroCreds Project Team
4.3	Rollout of a Universal Design Badge for Professional Services staff.	UCC staff take the UD badge.	Q1 2025 onwards	Deputy President and Registrar; Inclusive UCC Manager
4.4	Continue to demonstrate good practice and enhance Inclusive teaching, learning and assessment.	Existing staff development offerings that foster inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment enhanced.	Q1 2025 onwards	VP Teaching & Learning; CIRTL team
		Inclusive Assessment digital badge for staff and gather examples of change in practice rolled out.	Q1 2025 onwards	
		Continued delivery of Universal Design for Learning digital badge.	Q1 2025 onwards	
		Increased uptake of research supervisors taking the micro-credential "TL6010 Inclusive Academic Practice for Research Supervision	Q1 2025 onwards	
4.5	Undertake a digital accessibility audit of teaching and learning resources.	Baseline on the current accessibility of learning materials, online forms, and platforms established.	Q1-Q4 2027	Deputy President and Registrar; Inclusive UCC Manager
4.6	Continue to support digital accessibility through provision of staff development offerings.	'TL6009 Digital Education for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education' transformed into a micro-credential. Increased staff engagement with same.	Q1 2025 onwards	CIRTL team
		Tailored workshops delivered to attune staff to relevant digital tools.	Q1 2025	CDE
4.7	Undertake review of First Year Assessment across undergraduate programmes in four Colleges.	Framework for First Year Assessment completed and recommendations implemented.	Q1 2025 – Q4 2026	Dean, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies

Objective 4: GROWTH:
Enhancing Education, Research & Scholarship

4.8	Audit UCC's research to the EDI/SDG 5 & 10 and support researchers to understand impact of their work in these areas.	Clearer understanding and gap analysis of UCC's research outputs related to gender equality (SDG 5) and wider equality ground (SDG 10).	Q2-Q4 2026	Director of EDI; VP Research & Innovation; Data & Institutional Research Officer
4.9	Establish an EDI Early Career Grants Scheme for academics, researchers and practitioners.	Starter grant scheme for early career academic, researchers and practitioners from under-represented groups issued annually.	Q1 2026	CIRTL
4.10	Encourage scholarship on inclusive teaching, learning and assessment.	Specific call developed to encourage participants in the Master's in Teaching and Learning to focus on inclusive TLA as their research topic.	Q1 2026	CIRTL
4.11	Develop/launch training course on intercultural competence and multiculturalism.	Increased intercultural competency of staff and students through the acquisition of knowledge and skills about diverse groups identity, experience and cultures. % positive response rate in staff and student survey.	Q2-Q4 2027	VP Global; Director of EDI

Objective 5: ENGAGEMENT:
Understanding & Working with Our Community

No	Action	Measure of Progress	Timeframe	Action Owner
5.1	Continue to work in partnership with and resource staff networks.	Expansion and continued engagement with LGBT+ Network, Mná Women's Network, Race Equality Network, Staff Disability and Neurodivergence, and Carers' Network.	Q1 2025 onwards	Director of EDI; Staff Networks; Deputy President and Registrar
5.2	Engage with the HEA to develop LGBT+ national action plan for higher education and corresponding reporting.	Equivalent reporting established with HEA for the LGBT+ community in higher education.	Q1 2025 onwards	Director of EDI; LGBT+ Staff Network
5.3	Establish new Parents and Age Friendly staff network.	Increased peer support, awareness of and engagement for staff who are parents and staff who are older.	Q2 2026	Director of EDI
5.4	Engage and partner with Student Union Equality Committee in delivery of EDI programme of work.	Increased engagement with student body on EDI related matters.	Q1 2025 onwards	Director of EDI; Student Union Equality Committee
5.5	Develop and share EDI training and toolkits with UCC Student Clubs, Societies and EDI Staff Networks.	Increased understanding and embedding of EDI by student clubs, societies and EDI staff networks.	Q3 2025 onwards	Director of EDI; UCC Student Clubs, Societies; Staff Networks

5.6	Develop and deliver an EDI checklist for UCC external suppliers/vendors.	Human rights checklist developed/issued to UCC suppliers and vendors. Ensure alignment of UCC's EDI values and principles with external suppliers and vendors.	Q3 2027 – Q3 2028	VP Global; Director of EDI
5.7	Organise and host annual National Conference for EDI at UCC.	UCC to host EDI national conference for all partners HEIs.	Q2 2027	Director of EDI
5.8	Create and deliver a cohesive communications and marketing framework for UCC which includes an EDI proofed internal communications action plan.	Increased engagement by staff and students with EDI communications content and, awareness raising campaigns.	Q4 2025 onwards	VP Global; Director of Transformation – Marketing & Communications; Director of Marketing & Brand Impact; Director of Media & Communications; Director of EDI
5.9	Develop and implement an EDI events calendar, with an annual platform event around EDI Week.	% increase in participation at EDI events. Implement inclusive event guidelines. Recognition of attendance of EDI events as part of staff service.	Q3 2025 onwards	Director of EDI

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