



Gender Equality Task Force, NUIG

Terms of Reference

1 Background

Following the decision of the Equality Tribunal in favour of Dr Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, Údarás na hOllscoile, NUIG at its meeting on December 16th, 2014, accepted the decision of the Tribunal and acknowledged failures both in the oversight of compliance with good practice and in ensuring the implementation of gender equality in its academic and administrative procedures and processes.

It was therefore decided as a matter of urgency to establish a Task Force to assist the University in its determination to address this very important matter appropriately. The Task Force would be asked to assess and advise on how best the University could establish a process and a timeframe for the eradication of gender inequality in the University.

After careful consideration, Údarás na hOllscoile decided that the following principles should be applied in the selection of individuals invited to participate in the work of the Task Force:

- *“The need to ensure a high level of expertise and experience relevant to the work of the Task Force*
- *The need to have an external independent chairperson*
- *The desirability not to have representation from the University Management Team and Údarás na hOllscoile in order to assure the independence of the Task Force*
- *The desirability of affording considerable latitude and flexibility in the terms of reference for the Task Force*
- *The flexibility for the Task Force to request and hear evidence as it sees fit*
- *The need to ensure strong gender balance on the Task Force”.*¹

¹ Extract from Údarás na hOllscoile Minutes of January 30, 2015

2 Membership of the Task Force

The membership of the Task Force is comprised of individuals with extensive experience and expertise across a range of areas relevant to the work of the group. These include gender equality and diversity, human resource management, law, education, social policy, public administration, governance, mentoring, civil and human rights as well as the conduct of investigations and enquiries. The Task Force considers such depth and breadth of experience as essential to effectively address the complex and multi-faceted issue of gender inequality.

The current membership is as follows:

Chair: Professor Jane Grimson - Former Vice Provost of Trinity College Dublin and Acting Chief Executive of the Health Information and Quality Authority; first woman President of Engineers Ireland and the Irish Academy of Engineering; co-founder of WiSER (Women in Science and Engineering Research), TCD; Chair of the Equality Committee, TCD.

External members

Liam Bluett - General Manager, Ballybane Enterprise Centre, Community Group mentor

Norah Gibbons - Chair of the Child and Family Agency, Former Director of Advocacy Barnados.

Professor Áine Hyland – Former Vice President, University College Cork; Chair of the Equality Committee; conducted promotions reviews in UCC and RCSI

Dr John Kremer – Visiting Researcher, School of Psychology, Queen’s University Belfast; expert in equality and diversity in the workplace

Professor Gerry Loftus – Former Dean of the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, NUIG

Gráinne McMorrow – Senior Counsel, Sole Member of the Douch Commission of Investigation, International Human Rights expert, Founding Member of the Irish Women Lawyers Association, Member of the European Council’s Venice Commission, Professor of Law (Adjunct), NUIG, Former Chair of the Mental Health Act Commission Review Tribunals, Former President of NUIG Students Union.

Tadhg Ó hÉalaithe - Former Secretary General of the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Former Director of Corporate and Learner Awards Services at the Higher Education and Training Awards Council.

Internal members

Dr Louise Alcock – Lecturer, School of Natural Sciences, NUI Galway, Member of the University Women’s Network NUI Galway

Maria de Almeida Silva – PhD student in the School of Law

Dr Nata Duvvury – Senior Lecturer, School of Political Science and Sociology, NUI Galway, Co-Director of Centre for Women’s Studies NUI Galway; expert in international gender equality and development, Member of the University Women’s Network NUI Galway

Caroline Loughane – Academic Secretary, NUI Galway, Founding Member of the University Women’s Network NUI Galway.

Dr Niall Madden – Lecturer, School of Mathematics, Statistics and Applied Mathematics

Aoife McNena – HR Manager, NUI Galway, Member of the University Women’s Network NUI Galway

Professor Donncha O’Connell – Head of the School of Law, NUI Galway; Member of the Law Reform Commission and the Legal Aid Board, Wrote SIPTU Equality Guide and trained their officers

Professor Maura Sheehan – J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics; international expert in diversity in the workplace, Member of the University Women’s Network NUI Galway

Natalie Walsh – Research Support Officer, Research Office, NUI Galway; PhD student; Member of the University Women’s Network NUI Galway

External advisor: Professor Yvonne Galligan – Professor of Politics, Queens University Belfast and Head of Equality office

Rapporteur: Nicola McNicholas, Management Accountant, NUI Galway, Founding Member of the University Women’s Network NUI Galway and Athena Swan Self-assessment Team, NUI Galway

It was agreed that the Task Force may co-opt additional members where necessary.

3 Remit

The remit of the Task Force is as follows:

“ To consider the University’s present gender mix among staff, including academic and support staff, and advise the University what measures it should take and over what timescale to develop effective gender equality”.²

The overriding aim of the Task Force is to provide advice to Údarás na hOllscoile on how to bring about sustainable transformation on gender equality and diversity in the university in order to ensure that;

1. The contribution of all staff to the university is recognised and valued; and
2. All staff are equally supported in their work to achieve their full potential.

The Task Force will report directly to Údarás na hOllscoile and will be responsible for developing its own detailed terms of reference and methods of working.

² Extract from Údarás na hOllscoile Minutes of January 30, 2015

4 Methodology

The general methodology devised by the Task Force to fulfil its Terms of Reference is set out below. These may be extended or amended by the Task Force during the course of its work in order to fulfil its remit.

The methodology consists of 4 main work streams namely, consultation, information gathering, research and analysis.

Consultation

1. The Task Force is committed to consultation to assist it and to inform its work.
2. The Task Force will consult widely with individuals, groups, and representative bodies within the university community where possible regarding their experience at NUIG with particular reference to gender-related issues.
3. This consultation process seeks to be as inclusive as possible and therefore the Task Force invites submissions from all those in the University community willing to participate in the process of eradicating gender inequality in NUIG.
4. Upon request, any such submissions will remain confidential.

Information Gathering

5. The Task Force will also gather information relevant to its aims and objectives and will seek disclosure where necessary of all relevant material both historical and current that touches on its Terms of Reference.
6. The Task Force will define a comprehensive set of data relating to gender equality to be collected annually by the university in order to be able to monitor progress over time. The baseline will be established in 2015. The dataset will include, for example, data on recruitment, retention and promotion of academic and support staff including research staff, and postgraduate students, leadership positions, membership of key decision making committees, including promotions committees, and other relevant data. This baseline will take into account the data collected as part of the university's Athena Swan submission as well as previous reports on promotion to senior lectureship and personal professorships.

Research

7. The Task Force will take into account relevant published literature on gender equality where necessary.
8. The Task Force will oversee the identification of good practice in terms of gender equality that has been shown to be effective in other third-level institutions both nationally and internationally.

Analysis

9. The Task Force will analyse relevant information and data received with the help of external expertise if required.
10. The Task Force will oversee an examination and analysis of existing processes and structures related to gender equality in the University.

5 Working methods

- A minimum of 4 meetings at NUIG will be held in 2015.
- Members unable to attend in person will be able to participate via teleconference.
- Topics for the agenda will be generated by members of the Task Force in consultation with the Chair.
- Papers for meetings of the Task Force will be circulated by email at least one week in advance of the meeting.
- The Task Force may co-opt additional members.
- The Task Force may establish sub-groups to progress individual items of work; each sub-group will be chaired by a member of the Task Force.
- Non-members may be invited to attend meetings of the Task Force and/or of sub-groups as required.
- The Task Force will receive and consider any submissions from interested external parties on matters relevant to its work.
- The Task Force will develop a work programme with agreed timelines consistent with the objectives outlined above.

- Decision making will be based on consensus.
- The Secretariat for the Task Force will be provided by the University.

6 Sharing of information and resources (including confidential materials)

- Subject to there being no data protection/confidentiality issues, the Task Force will operate in an open and transparent manner unless a member specifically requests that a matter is to remain confidential to the group
- Members will be able to share information and resources through task force meetings and electronic communications.
- NUIG will facilitate the development of a public web space for the Task Force as well as a secure password-protected workspace for members of the Group to share resources.

7 Recommendations

The Task Force having analysed and considered the information and data received will proceed to frame its recommendations for submission to Údarás na hOllscoile. These recommendations will aim to identify appropriate Key Performance Indicators with realistically deliverable timescales and will take into account the actions arising from the Athena Swan submission. It is envisaged that these recommendations will be taken forward as part of the process of developing a systematic and comprehensive Gender Action Plan by the University which includes a clear monitoring and evaluation system together with on-going review and public reporting of progress.

In recognition of the urgency and importance of its work, the Task Force will endeavour to finalise its recommendations within the shortest possible timeframe. In that regard it is the intention of the Task Force to deliver its first report and initial recommendations to Údarás na hOllscoile at its meeting on 23rd June 2015.

Thereafter, it will report periodically to Údarás na hOllscoile and with a view to producing a comprehensive report by March 31st 2016, at which point a decision will be taken as to whether it should continue.

8 Amendments to the Terms of Reference

The Task Force may amend the Terms of Reference during the course of its work.