



## Gender Equality at NUI Galway

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### What is the University's position on gender equality?

NUI Galway is absolutely committed to addressing the issue of gender equality.

- We won't be happy until we have achieved complete gender equality across the University.
- We are on a journey:
  - in 2008/09 a mere 6% of Senior Lecturer promotions at NUI Galway went to women, an unusually low number by comparison with previous promotion schemes
  - in 2013/14 that increased to 39%
  - our ambition is to get to a position where, over a series of promotion rounds, 50% of promotees are women
  - ultimately we want all our staff to have equal access to opportunity, irrespective of their gender
- We have taken major steps to change our promotion processes since the 2008/09 scheme.
- We recognise there is a continuous need for change and that is why we have set in motion a whole range of initiatives to help us achieve gender equality.

### What is the University doing to advance gender equality?

NUI Galway is committed to achieving gender equality at all levels across the University and has set in train a number of initiatives to address our current practices:

- 1. Establishing a high-level independent Task Force:** Led by Professor Jane Grimson, a former Vice Provost at TCD, with a strong panel of external representatives. The Task Force is reviewing all our gender equality policies. The President and Governing Authority have committed that the recommendations of the Task Force will be implemented in full by the University.
- 2. Amendments to Senior Lecturer Promotion Scheme:** Following the 2008/09 Senior Lecturer Promotion Scheme, the University introduced affirmative action, balanced boards, and a training programme in gender awareness and recognising unconscious bias

3. **Review of 2013/14 Senior Lecturer Promotion Scheme:** The Registrar is currently leading a review of the 2013/14 Scheme, with a view to continuing to enhance our promotion practices in respect of gender equality in the next promotion round in 2016.
4. **Athena SWAN:** We have signed the Athena SWAN Charter and we are currently preparing a University Bronze submission. Athena SWAN is an international programme that recognises and celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women in Higher Education. The programme will enable us to set ourselves challenging targets towards achieving gender equality that will be assessed by an external panel of academics from the UK. We will be reviewed every three years.
5. **Equality Review:** We have requested the Irish University Association and Higher Education Authority formally call on the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) to carry out an Equality Review of the entire Higher Education sector in Ireland.
6. **Professorial Promotion:** The Professorial Promotion scheme is currently under review to ensure it is fit for purpose in time for the next round of promotions.

## About the Task Force

The Task Force has a broad remit to consider the University's present gender mix among staff, including academic and support staff, and to advise the University what measures it should take to develop gender equality and over what timescale.

- The Task Force was appointed by the Governing Authority of the University, and Professor Jane Grimson, former Vice Provost of TCD, has been announced as its Chair.
- It is made up of 17 members from a broad field with strong credentials in the area of gender equality, eight of whom are external to the University.
- Over 60% of the taskforce membership is female (11/17).
- The Task Force will set its own terms of reference.
- The Task Force will seek submissions from all staff and students in the course of its work.
- An indicative timescale of 18 months has been given for the completion of all work by the Task Force and it reports directly to Údarás na hOllscoile, the University's Governing Authority. It is expected to make interim reports and recommendations at various stages over the course of that time.

The composition of the Task force was determined by the following factors:

- 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 importance of maintaining the independence of all members by not selecting any representatives from the University Management Team or Údarás na hOllscoile.
- The flexibility for the Task Force to request and hear evidence as it sees fit.
- The importance of strong gender balance.

## Background to the Gender Equality Case against NUI Galway

- 2008/09:** NUI Galway ran a Senior Lecturer (SL) Promotion Scheme in which 17 promotions were made: 16 to male and 1 to female staff members, resulting in only 6% of all promotions being made to a female.
- 2009/10:** The University moved to conduct a comprehensive review of the SL Scheme with a view to addressing the significant gender imbalance clearly apparent from the results of the 2008/09 scheme.
- 2010:** The Government introduced a blanket ban on promotions in the public sector – the effect of which is to close the promotion scheme at NUI Galway until 2013.
- 2013/14:** A new SL Promotion Scheme opens at NUI Galway incorporating changes as a result of a review of the previous scheme. A total of 31 staff were promoted, 12 of whom were female (39% of all promotions).
- Nov. 2014:** The Equality Tribunal found against NUI Galway in the case of Dr Micheline Sheehy Skeffington's application for promotion to SL in 2008/9, on the grounds of gender discrimination.
- The decision of the Equality Tribunal was particular to Dr Sheehy Skeffington: it was not a class action, and the outcome does not apply to other applicants in the 2008/09 SL promotion scheme.
- Dec. 2014:** Five applicants to the 2013/14 Senior Lecturer promotion scheme initiate legal proceedings against the University on the outcome of **the 2013/14 competition**.

## Measures undertaken to address gender imbalance in Senior Lecturer Promotion Scheme

NUI Galway commissioned a report into the Senior Lecturer promotion processes by Professor Liz Doherty, Emeritus Professor of Human Resource Management at Sheffield Hallam University. Working with NUI Galway's Equality Manager, Aoife Cooke, Professor Doherty's report identified some of the key issues involved and a number of steps were taken by the University to address these:

- 1. Affirmative Action:** The University introduced a programme of affirmative action, guaranteeing that at least one third of promotional places in any subsequent SL Scheme would be awarded to women.
- 2. Gender awareness training:** All members of promotion boards throughout the University attended a training programme in gender awareness and recognising unconscious bias.
- 3. Balanced boards:** The make-up of all promotion boards was reviewed and updated to ensure an equal composition of male and female members.
- 4. Weighting according to strengths:** The 2013/14 SL Promotion Scheme allowed all candidates to apply an extra weighting to their strongest of three fields: Teaching, Research or Contribution – allowing them to gain recognition for their strongest area, not just relying on research.

## How does NUI Galway compare with other universities in Ireland and abroad?

This is a broad cross-institutional issue, but we acknowledge that NUI Galway has significant steps to take to address the gender imbalance, particularly at senior levels, at the University.

- **Ireland:** The average for Ireland is 19% female to 81% male professors (source: HEA data)
- **UK:** In 2013/14, 22% of professors were female (source: HESA)
- **Sweden:** In 2013, 24% of professors were female (source: KIF Committee, EU Commission)

### % Female Professors across Irish universities

Institution	% female Established Professors	% female Personal/Associate Professors
NUI Galway	14%	13%
TCD	14%	45%
UCC	16%	25%
DCU	17%	24%
UCD	20%	27%
NUIM	23%	17%
UL	31%	17%

Source: HEA Report, December 2013

### Breakdown of Gender across Support Staff at NUI Galway

	Female	Male	Total	% Female
SECRETARY	2	4	6	33%
ASSOCIATE SECRETARY	0	3	3	0%
ASSISTANT SECRETARY	5	2	7	71%
DIRECTOR	1	4	5	20%
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	28	23	51	55%
GRADE 5	53	29	82	65%
GRADE 4	83	14	97	86%
GRADE 3	126	9	135	93%
GRADE 2	166	5	171	97%
GRADE 1	17	3	20	83%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>83%</b>

Source: NUI Galway HR Office 2015

Ultimately we want to get to a position where all our staff have equal access to opportunity, irrespective of their gender, and that outcomes for women in terms of progression and promotion are equitable.