TERMS OF REFERENCE:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee,

College of Engineering and Informatics,

National University of Ireland, Galway

1.   STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The College of Engineering and Informatics (CoEI) Equality and Diversity Working Group (E&DWG) was convened in October 2016 with the remit of promoting equality and diversity initiatives and providing advice to the College of Engineering and Informatics for the purpose of ensuring that the CoEI has an all-inclusive working environment.

2.   VISION

The vision for the CoEI E&DWG henceforth called the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Committee and referred to as the Committee, is as follows

2.1.   To support the working environment for all, in alignment with NUI Galway's Vision 2020 Strategic Plan and the CoEI Operational Plan and international standards such as those championed by the Athena SWAN Charter.

2.2.   To promote awareness of equality, diversity and inclusivity issues within the CoEI.

2.3.   To embed a culture of participation and inclusivity, where all staff and students feel valued.

2.4.   To inspire staff and students to respect equality, diversity and inclusivity issues taking account of changing legislation and best practice evidence.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Committee in the fulfilment of its visions include:

3.1.   To encourage student and staff input to the EDI strategic agenda.

3.2.   To facilitate a two way communication process between the Equality and Diversity Office and CoEI stakeholders.

3.3.   To oversee the design, implementation and periodic review of the CoEI equality objectives (at least every 4 years), to review and if necessary prioritise action plans to reflect national guidance (such as the Athena SWAN Award System).

3.4.   To provide a focus for all equality, diversity and inclusivity issues within the CoEI.

3.5.   To provide a forum for discussion on equality, diversity and inclusivity issues within the CoEI.

3.6.   To oversee the involvement of major stakeholders, including staff and students through a variety of channels - individual engagement, internal focus groups, and anonymous surveys together with alumni, local community groups and engagement with national organisations.

3.7.   To maintain a public website to communicate EDI activities and initiatives and status.

Considering the above objectives, there will be a focus on the following three main areas:

- Operational issues.
- Student focused activities.
- Employment issues.

4.   ROLE

4.1.   The role of the Committee is to enable the CoEI to; promote, maintain and support equality, diversity and inclusivity values for all staff and students, embed accessible, responsive and appropriate access to engineering and informatics education, irrespective of personal characteristics and encourage CoEI staff to fully contribute, develop and flourish at work, thereby maximising their potential.

4.2.   The Committee will carry out its responsibilities for the CoEI EDI vision and provide direction from and input into the University's strategic direction, leadership and support for EDI.

4.3. The Committee is the formal mechanism by which the CoEI can oversee its processes providing equality of opportunity for current and prospective staff and students on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4.4. The Committee aims to inspire our Academic, Administrative, Research and Support staff to embrace the EDI values – to be kind, caring, safe and responsible, and to value each other. These values are pivotal in the delivery process of quality services to ensure an optimum staff and student experience.

4.5. To support the network of School/Discipline EDI Leads or Champions, who will liaise with members of the EDI Network to raise awareness of EDI issues within their Discipline/School.

5. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Committee is to embed EDI values into teaching, research and contribution to society activities involving staff and students. In particular, the Committee will advise and liaise with the CoEI to fully integrate EDI into the operational and decision-making processes through;

5.1. Ensuring that its public and private stakeholders (i.e. current and future students and staff, alumni, schools, research agencies, industry and private partnerships and academic colleagues) across the globe can make themselves aware of CoEI EDI values and are able to access educational information about engineering and informatics opportunities.

5.2. Supporting the CoEI in the review and development of inclusive practices and the promotion and integration of EDI values within the CoEI in order to; improve the student and staff campus experience, provide inclusive and accessible education services and create a diverse and inclusive workplace environment.

5.3. Advising the CoEI on how to address diverse staff, student and community EDI needs to ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all.

5.4. Actioning EDI improvements, updates and issues through an agreed work plan/schedule which consists of priorities that link to NUI Galway's strategic direction.

5.5. Supporting the CoEI within the context of the University's statutory obligations in respect of EDI.

5.6. Harnessing insights and ideas across the CoEI to incorporate into policies and working practices.

6. MEMBERSHIP

The membership inclusively comprises representatives from all categories of staff (academic, administrative, research and support) including contract staff and 2 student representatives (post graduate and undergraduate). The composition of the Committee, will be appropriately gender represented whilst having a broad representation of all staff groups in College. The Committee will encourage all members to participate in appropriate equality and diversity training. In general, committee members will sit for a term of no more than four (4) years with the exception of the Dean of the CoEI. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be the Dean of the CoEI or the Dean's nominee. Members will have equal voting rights. When relevant, the Chairperson has the casting vote. Membership of the Committee shall be reviewed annually by the Chairperson in consultation with the Committee and changes as required shall be recommended to the College Board.

7. COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS

The Committee's effectiveness will be monitored through;

7.1. An annual audit of attendance.

7.2. The publication of meetings minutes.

7.3. Progress against the CoEI EDI and Institutional Athena Swan Action Plan and overall objectives.

8. COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the Committee is as follows:

8.1. Meetings dates will be organised by consensus via Doodlepoll.

8.2. The agenda and related documents will be circulated prior to the meeting

8.3. Administrative support for minute taking will be provided by the CoEI office.

8.4. The Committee may, from time to time, arrange for subgroups to consider specialist issues and bring forward recommendations to the Committee.

9. MEETING FREQUENCY AND QUORUM

The Committee will normally hold meetings prior to the CoEI Board (or as often as is necessary to complete its business or to deal with urgent matters). The Committee will meet at least four times per year.

In the event that it is not practical to hold a meeting such as due to the urgency of the matter in question, the Chairperson may arrange for an item to be circulated to members for their views and decision. Such decisions must be ratified at the next meeting of the Committee. In exceptional circumstances, the Chairperson may make decisions where the importance and urgency of a matter precludes consulting all Committee members. Such decisions must be reported to the Committee in writing without delay and included on the agenda of the next Committee meeting. The Chairperson may call additional meetings at their initiative or at the request of two members. The Committee may also invite any or other person to attend any meeting(s) of the Committee, as it may from time to time consider desirable, to assist the Committee in achieving its objectives.

A quorum of 4 members is required to be present to enable the Committee to undertake its function. This is to include the Chair plus 3 others.

10. AUTHORITY

10.1. The Committee shall operate under delegated authority from the CoEI Board, which is ultimately responsible for all matters relating to EDI.

10.2. The Committee may consider/review any matters falling within its terms of reference, calling on whatever resources and information it considers necessary to do so.

10.3. The Committee is authorised to seek any information it requires from any employee of the College to enable it to discharge its responsibilities. This information shall be made available on a timely basis.

12. OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

The minutes from each meeting will be published on the CoEI intranet/shared drive and/or website following approval by the CoEI Board.

13.   REVIEW

The Committee will review its output, working methods and terms of reference annually. Changes to the Terms of Reference must be agreed by a Committee majority.