



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

RCSI recognises the educational and organisational benefits of having a diverse community of employees and students and is committed to providing an environment where equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded and at the core of all our activities. This is a commitment that is endorsed and led by our University leaders. We aspire to a University environment where everyone feels they are treated fairly and can achieve their full potential.

Scope

The policy applies to all members of the RCSI community listed below, actions in person or virtually and through any form of communication, verbal, written or otherwise.

- Council
- Staff
- Students and student applicants
- Honorary appointments
- Emeritus appointments
- Job applicants
- Contractors
- Visitors
- Those representing RCSI

This policy is jointly owned by Equality Diversity and Inclusion Unit (EDI) and the Department of Human Resources (HR) to encompass and support both student and staff stakeholders.

Policy Statement

This policy reflects our intention to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion underpins all our activities and supports us in adhering to all relevant legislation, as detailed below.

It is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of the nine grounds of age, disability, gender, family status, race, religion, civil status, sexual orientation or being a member of the Traveller community. These protected characteristics are defined as “grounds”.

RCSI has also committed to recognising a tenth equality ground, socio-economic-status, a measure of economic and social position in relation to others, based on the income, education, and occupation of an individual and their family.

Associated Policies

RCSI has a broad suite of policies to support and enable staff and students that specifically support the vision of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. The full list of all staff policies are accessible internally on [our intranet](#) and externally on our [public website](#). All student policies are accessible on our [Virtual Learning Environment](#).

RCSI is committed to embedding a culture of EDI in the University. Where breaches of this policy have been committed, RCSI reserves the right to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Applicable Staff Policies:

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Domestic Abuse and Violence Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Gender Expression and Identity Policy
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Right to Disconnect
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

Applicable Student Policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Bullying and harassment
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Gender Expression and Identity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Student Code of Conduct

Vision

RCSI is committed to embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across everything we do. We actively work to foster an inclusive and vibrant university community where every member of our student and staff body is respected, valued, and celebrated for their unique, diverse and intersecting identities. We will continue to invest in developing collaborative programmes and initiatives. Our goal is to raise awareness, educate and empower our community while achieving positive and lasting change.

Legislation

RCSI is guided by equality legislation which is enshrined in the Irish Constitution to ensure that we develop and mainstream inclusive and supportive policies and procedures to create and maintain a study and work environment where everyone can fulfil their potential.

There are different legislative measures in place that protect people from discrimination. The University will apply this policy in compliance with and in the spirit of the relevant legislation and will ensure that RCSI complies with all new equality legislation as and when enacted.

The **Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015** outlaw discrimination in a wide range of employment and employment-related areas. These include recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment. The main type of unlawful discrimination involves the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds.

The **Equal Status Acts 2000-2015** prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, the provision of accommodation and access to education, on any of the nine grounds. The Acts outlaw discrimination in all services that are generally available to the public whether provided by the State or the private sector. All policies and policy-related documents and forms are subject to amendment.

The **Disability Act 2005** places a statutory obligation on public service providers to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities.

The **Gender Recognition Act 2015** provides a process enabling transgender people to achieve full legal recognition of their true gender and allows for the acquisition of a new birth certificate that reflects this change. The Gender Recognition Act allows all individuals over the age of 18 to self-declare their own gender identity.

10 University Equality Grounds

- Gender (including gender identity): a person's gender identity including man, woman, including transgender man and transgender woman and non-binary
- Civil status: a person's civil status be it single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnered and formerly civil partnered
- Family status: being a parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability
- Sexual orientation: a person's sexual orientation including gay, lesbian, asexual, bisexual and heterosexual
- Religion: a person's religious belief, background, outlook or none
- Age: a person's age, this equality ground does not apply to a person aged under 16
- Disability: includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical and chronic conditions
- Race: includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin
- Membership of the Traveller community: recognised as an ethnic group
- Socioeconomic status: A person's social and economic background.

Governance

In 2023, RCSI affirmed its commitment to embedding EDI across all we do in [RCSI's institutional 2023-2027 strategy](#). RCSI has put in place a number of structures to support the implementation and embedding of EDI throughout the University. These include both formal and informal committees, forums and networks, most of which are championed by SMT members. The membership is drawn from across the University. The goal of the groups listed below is to consult, develop and implement action plans and targeted initiatives. Our institutional Athena Swan Action Plan forms the basis for RCSI's EDI work and ownership is shared across the institution. The governance is as follows:

EDI Unit

The RCSI EDI Unit was established in 2017. The Unit manages, promotes and coordinates EDI activities across the University. The Unit is comprised of four staff, their roles are as follows:

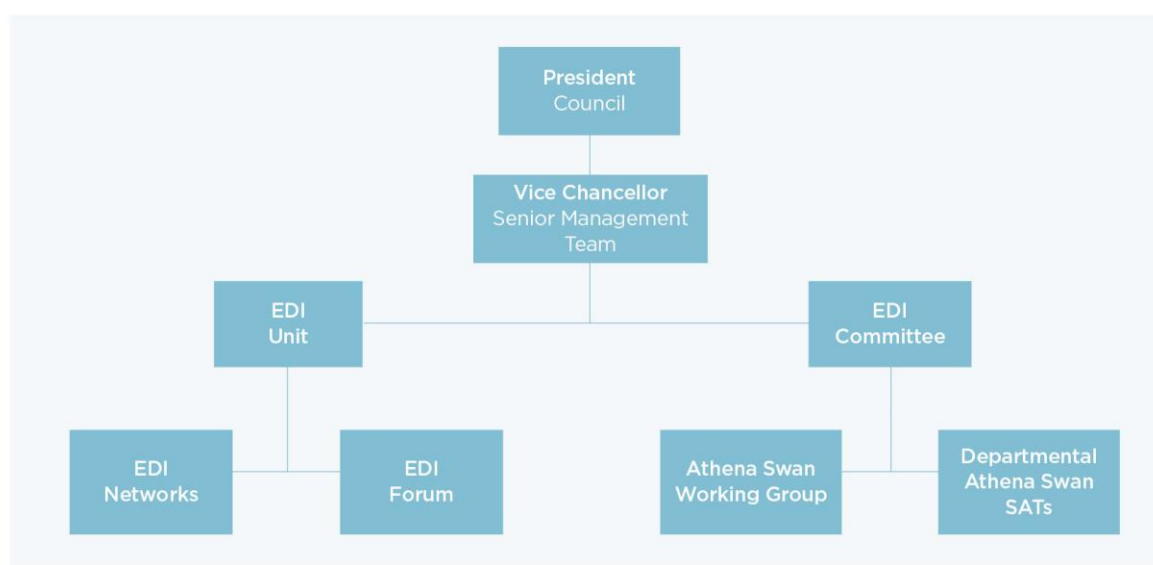
- Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Research and Policy Officer
- Athena SWAN Project Officer
- Events and Communications Co-ordinator

EDI Committee

The RCSI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) was established in 2019. The committee, which is comprised of students and staff, is responsible for advising the Senior Management Team on all equality, diversity and inclusion matters in RCSI. The Committee is chaired by Senior Management Team member and Director of International Engagement and External Relations, Abi Kelly.

The EDI Committee is the oversight body. The EDI Unit is the team responsible for implementing the day-to-day requirements of the policy and activities. All EDI activity is guided by the 10 university equality grounds as detailed above.

RCSI EDI Governance and Reporting Structure



Athena Swan

Athena Swan is a global framework used in Higher Education to support and transform gender equality. It was established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment. The Charter is now being used across the globe to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.

The Athena Swan charter launched in the Republic of Ireland in 2015. Engagement with the charter is a key pillar of Ireland's national strategy for gender equality with progress linked to institutional eligibility for funding from Ireland's major research agencies. RCSI was awarded the institutional Athena Swan Bronze accreditation for positive gender practice in higher education in 2018 and renewed our institutional bronze award in August 2023. Here is a copy of [RCSI's Institutional Athena Swan Bronze Renewal 2023 submission](#).

RCSI continues to invest in Athena Swan and the University holds a number of individual School and Departmental Awards.

The revised Athena Swan charter was launched in October 2021 and now has a greater intersectional focus which means that Athena Swan work now goes beyond gender to advance other equality grounds such as race/ethnicity and disability.

EDI Awareness and Engagement

There are three key EDI Fora in RCSI which are sub-groups of the EDI Committee. Each forum is comprised of staff and student representatives

1. Race Equality Forum
 - The purpose of the RCSI Race Equality Forum of staff and students is a university-wide forum whose objective is to promote progress and good practice in relation to race equality.
2. Ending Sexual Violence, Supporting Survivors and Promoting Consent (ESP)
 - The purpose of the RCSI ESP Forum of staff and students is a university-wide forum whose objective is to end sexual violence, support survivors of sexual violence and promote consent in our University and beyond.
3. VisABILITY Forum
 - The purpose of the RCSI VisABILITY Forum of staff and students is a university-wide forum whose objective is to support and promote the rights of students and staff with disabilities.

RCSI has established five staff equality networks. These are driven by staff interests and supported by the EDI Unit. The EDI Networks are championed by SMT Sponsors.

1. Age Friendly Network
2. Multicultural Network
3. Parents and Carers' Network
4. Pride Network
5. Women's Network

To become involved in any of the above fora or networks please contact equality@rcsi.com.

Sustainable Development Goals

This policy also supports RCSI commitment to ensuring that our actions through our research, teaching activities, community engagement and campus operations, lead the world to better health and prosperity for all. This includes tackling issues affecting human health and well-being, global health inequity and is a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Accord. RCSI is committed to progressing the SDGs, further information may be accessed in [this document](#).

Training and Awareness

RCSI is committed to raising awareness and understanding across all equality grounds. A range of training programmes and issue-led campaigns are delivered throughout the year.

Seeking Supports

There are a number of RCSI supports available to you should you need to seek any guidance or support on any aspect of this policy.

Sources of Support

EDI Team

- Liz Hughes lizhughes@rcsi.com
- Jenny Duffy jennyduffy@rcsi.com
- Shauna Lawless shaunalawless@rcsi.com
- Julia Morrow juliamorrow@rcsi.com

HR Partners

- Cathy Buffini cathybuffini@rcsi.com
- Mark O'Dea markodea@rcsi.com
- Rachel Hipwell rachelhipwell@rcsi.com
- Maggie Walshe maggiewalshe@rcsi.com

Student Welfare and Wellbeing Team

- Noel O'Callaghan noelocalaghan@rcsi.com
- Student Welfare swo@rcsi.com

Employee Assistance Programme

To contact the Spectrum.life Employee Assistance Programme service, please contact:

- Freephone ROI: 1800 903 542
- WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

Policy Review

The Human Resources Department will ensure that this policy will be monitored and kept under review.