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THE PUBLICATION OF THIS PROPOSAL IS INTENDED TO SHARE GOOD PRACTICE AND INFORM OTHER POTENTIAL APPLICANTS, BUT READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS EVALUATED AND SELECTED BASED ON THE 2024 RULES OF CONTEST AND CRITERIA, WHICH MAY CHANGE IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS.

APPLICATION FORM (PART B)

COVER PAGE

PROJECT[1]	
Project name:	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University of Medicine and Health Sciences
Project acronym:	RCSI
Coordinator contact:	Liz HUGHES, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, RCSI

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1. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Describe the application in detail, specifically addressing each of the award criteria set out in the Rules of Contest (see also below). Hyperlinks should not be used to extend the length of the Part B.

Award criterion 1: Progress achieved

The applicant should demonstrate through concrete examples the progress achieved in creating positive institutional change towards inclusive gender equality through the implementation of its inclusive GEP, and in covering at least three of the five thematic areas recommended in the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 General Annex B[2]. The applicant must support their claims with qualitative, and as much as possible, with quantitative data including baselines, performance measures and indicators.

Under this criterion, the applicant could answer the following guiding questions:

a) What was the period of the fully implemented GEP? What were the applicant's objectives and how were they linked to at least three of the recommended thematic areas expected to be covered by the GEP under this prize category?

b) What tangible actions were put in place for the four process-related phases (audit, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) to get to those objectives?

c) What was the starting point (institutional context/culture) and what has been the progress achieved in the fully implemented inclusive GEP (please clearly illustrate progress by providing as much as possible baselines, performance measures and indicators)?

d) How does the applicant demonstrate the creation of positive institutional change towards gender equality through the implemented inclusive GEP (please, provide concrete examples)?

[1] For ease of reference and consistency on the Funding & Tenders Portal, the terms 'call', 'project', 'proposal', 'coordinator' or 'beneficiary' (or other project-related acronyms like COO or BEN) are used as equivalent to 'contest', 'application' or 'contestants/applicants'.

[2] Pages 16-17.

Part A

The period of the fully implemented GEP was 2018 to 2023 (referred to as GEP 2018-2023 or GEP). We made significant progress on 90% of our actions. We present the building blocks that we used to achieve several key objectives including the number of senior female staff at Professor level was 33% in 2023, an increase of 10% since 2017.

RCSI is Ireland's largest medical school, awarding undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and conducting research across a range of healthcare-related disciplines. RCSI has dual status in Irish and EU legislation (1) University of Medicine & Health Sciences and (2) Professional Training Body for Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties. RCSI is a private, not-for-profit, registered charity with a mission "to educate, nurture and discover for the benefit of human health". For the fourth time in five years RCSI has ranked in the top five in the world for UN Sustainable Development Goal #3, 'Good Health and Wellbeing' in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings (the highest position of any European university for SDG3) and ranked in the top 300 in the Times Higher Education HE World University Rankings 2025. RCSI is also ranked in the Top 200 of the THE Clinical & Health 2024, the 200 QS Subject Ranking in Medicine 2024, the Top 200 QS Subject Ranking in Pharmacy & Pharmacology 2024 and the Top 200 QS Subject Ranking in Nursing 2024. Located in the heart of Dublin with four international campuses, students from more than 60 countries worldwide and a network of alumni spanning 97 countries, we have a global reach that informs a global perspective on how we train our future healthcare professionals. As an independent, not-for-profit institution, we chart our own course in service of excellence in human health.

The following table maps our GEP 2018-2023 objectives grouped by theme (column one) on to the EU Gender Equality thematic areas (column two).

RCSI Gender Equality Plan 2018-2023 Objectives	**Mapping to Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 General Annex B Thematic Areas**
1. Description of the Institution 1.1 Consolidate EDI Structure and mandate at RCSI	1. Work-life balance and organisational culture
2. Self-Assessment Team 2.1 Ensure fully functioning, effectively supported and transparent Athena Swan/Gender Equality Working Group	2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
3. Picture of the Institution 3.1 Academic Staff 3.2 Research staff 3.3 Academic & Research Contracts 3.4 Academic Leavers 3.5 Equal Pay Audit	4. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
4. Supporting and Advancing Careers 4.1 Recruitment 4.2 Induction 4.3 Promotions	3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

5. Career Development 5.1 Training 5.2 Appraisal 5.3 Support Given to Academic Staff for Career Progression	3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression 5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.
6. Flexible Working 6.1 Cover Before Maternity & Adoptive leave 6.2 Cover During Maternity & Adoptive Leave 6.3 Cover and Support for Maternity & Adoptive leave: Returning to Work 6.4 Maternity Return Rate 6.5 Support During Parental and Paternity Leave 6.6 Childcare 6.7 Caring Responsibilities	1. Work-life balance and organisational culture
7. Organisation & Culture 7.1 Culture 7.2 HR Policies 7.3 Proportion of Heads of School/Department by Gender 7.4 Representation of Men and Women on Senior Management Team 7.5 Representation of Men and Women on Influential Institutional Committees 7.6 Institutional Policies, Practices and Procedures 7.7 Workload Modelling 7.8 Timing of Institutional Meetings and Social Gatherings 7.9 Visibility of Role Models 7.10 Outreach 7.11 Leadership/Departmental Applications	1. Work-life balance and organisational culture 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
8. Supporting Trans People 8.1 Current Policy & Practice 8.2 Monitoring 8.3 Further Information	4. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
9. Intersectionality Data Collection	1. Work-life balance and organisational culture 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Part B

1) Audit: Staff and student consultation was an integral part of our self-assessment and a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to collect data which was then analysed by our dedicated Gender Equality Working Group (Working Group or WG).

EDI Staff Survey: RCSI regularly conducts a comprehensive staff survey (approximately

100 questions comprised of multiple choice, Likert scale and free text question types) capturing feedback, experiences and opinions of staff members' experiences of working at RCSI, their sense of psychological safety and priorities related to equality grounds. The survey response rates over the last five years are: 2018 was 63% (n=704); 2019 was 58% (n=654); 2020: 45% (n=511); 2021: 48% (n=602); 2022: 51% (n=633); and 2023: 50% (n=673). The findings from the survey are presented at all-staff meetings, to the Senior Management Team (SMT), the EDI Committee (EDIC) and our governing Council. We believe that communications with staff and increased departmental engagement are key to maintaining a high response rate and delivering a feedback loop.

Pulse Surveys: RCSI also conducts Pulse Surveys that provide valuable feedback relating to core themes included in our GEP (e.g. flexible and hybrid working, well-being and engagement). The pulse survey format is different to the EDI Staff survey in that pulse surveys ask 5 to 10 questions and they are focused on one or two key themes. Staff response rates are high (e.g. 40% in February 2022).

Student EDI Survey: The response rate for our annual Student EDI Survey (January 2022) was 7% (total for UG, PGR, PGT) increasing to 14% in 2023. In this survey, we collect equality data, and data on experiences of discrimination, including knowledge of and confidence in RCSI reporting mechanisms.

Staff Focus Groups: In July and August 2022, the EDI Unit conducted five staff focus groups to research the impact and implementation of GEP objectives. The discussions considered the ways in which staff describe their experience at work in RCSI and further explored themes highlighted in the EDI Staff Surveys. The focus groups consulted the key staff cohorts: (1) Academic Staff; (2) Profession, Managerial and Support Staff (PMSS); (3) Research Staff; (4) Parents and Carers; and (5) All Staff. Additionally, the qualitative data derived from free-text responses in the EDI Staff Survey supplement our focus group analysis. We also conduct focus groups as needed to inform specific actions, such as our Race Equality and VisABILITY Action Plans.

EDI Strategy Evaluation: Between September and November 2022, an external evaluation of the RCSI EDI Strategy and Action Plan was undertaken. The evaluation reviewed the delivery and impact of the EDI Action Plan, as well as wider institutional engagement in driving EDI. Themes explored were aligned with gender equality themes and objectives: people and culture, career progression, women's leadership and representation, leadership engagement with EDI and policy and processes. The consultation included: staff interviews (3 academic and research (A&R) staff, 1 professional staff (PMSS); 3F/1M); senior Women's Focus Group (6 A&R staff, 3 PMSS); and a student focus group (5 students (4F/1M)).

2) Planning: Our planning process began with the establishment of an Institutional Self-Assessment Team (SAT) to create actions which would support and foster gender equality, reflecting the unique RCSI context and based on feedback gathered during our audit phase. The SAT has 26 members (73%F) divided into six workstreams: Governance, Education, Communications, Data, Policy and Implementation. The SAT was chaired by our Vice-Chancellor(VC)/CEO, Prof Cathal Kelly (M). Members of the SAT are either in a role with

specific responsibility under our GEP 2018 - 2023 or have been nominated to represent their Department/School or committee to ensure representation of stakeholders across the University. As part of our self-assessment, workstreams met monthly between June 2022 to May 2023, in between EDIC and SAT meetings, and Workstream Leads convened 6 times. As part of this exercise, the SAT reflected on how it functions as a working group and the impact of COVID-19. We had limited progress in one of our overall objectives "to ensure fully functioning, effectively supported and transparent SAT" due to Covid-19 and reflected on key challenges. Prior to the SAT reconvening in 2022 to conduct an assessment, the EDIC provided oversight of our GEP progress and reported updates to senior management annually. Reporting to the EDIC included updates on EDI staff and student survey results.

3) Implementation: In 2022, the Institutional SAT was reconstituted as the Gender Equality Working Group (Working Group or WG). This group is tasked with implementing and assessing GEP 2018 – 2023 and preparing our next GEP 2023 - 2027. For the duration of this process (January 2022 – April 2023), the WG was embedded within the EDIC for the purpose of streamlining resources and respecting staff time. The majority of every EDIC agenda focused on GEP 2018 - 2023. All GEP documentation was managed through SharePoint. This approach ensured regular engagement and prevented the potential overburdening of any particular staff cohort. We aim to formalise the recognition of any EDI work (service) in the institutional Professional Development Plan process by adding an EDI service objective and for gender equality committee work (e.g. departmental SATs, GE Champions, GEWG membership) to be recognised in work allocation.

4) Monitoring & Evaluation: GEP2018-2023 contained 109 actions and progress was monitored by the use of a RAG framework. 73% (79) have been completed (green), with a further 17% (19) amber where we have made good progress, but the action is still ongoing; and 10% (11) red that we have stalled on progress mostly due to COVID-19 delays or have re-evaluated our approach for GEP 2023 – 2027. This means that we have progressed/completed 90% (98) of our actions. Each of the six Working Group workstream leads reports on their progress at the EDIC meetings.

Please note that throughout this document we reference data collected from our audit activities (described in more detail above) to demonstrate longitudinal and cross-sectional impact. First, in discussions related to long-term progress on GEP actions and to validate longitudinal impact, we present Human Resources and EDI Survey data from 2017 (baseline data) and 2021. Second, in discussions reflecting on an activity or initiative that took place at one moment in time, we use 2023 data. Thus, we have included data from 2017 and 2021 as well as 2023, to demonstrate our longitudinal and cross-sectional GEP impact.

Part C

In 2017, RCSI embarked on formally embedding gender equality practices and organisational goals by establishing a dedicated EDI infrastructure to ensure that gender equality and all protected characteristics are effectively supported in RCSI culture and practice. As part of RCSI's GEP 2018-2023, we have achieved the following in relation to EDI governance:

- Established an EDI office with four staff and dedicated budget;

- Established an EDI Committee (EDIC) (whose membership includes student and staff representatives) to oversee EDI governance which meets three times per year;
- Conducted a policy review of all 44 institutional policies with an EDI lens to ensure they were aligned to our gender equality goals.
- Introduced new policies, including an EDI Policy, a Dignity at Work Policy, Breastfeeding Policy, Right to Disconnect Policy, Menopause Policy and Domestic Violence and Abuse (Paid) Leave Policy.
- Progressed beyond actions and objectives within GEP 2018-2023, and in response to staff and societal needs, established three staff and student forums: Ending Sexual Violence, Supporting Survivors and Promoting Consent (ESP), VisABILITY and Race Equality (REF). Each forum is provided with a specific budget and is implementing an individual three-year action plan;
- Established 5 staff networks (Parents & Carers', Pride, Age-Friendly, Women's and Multicultural) that meet 2 - 6 times per year and are resourced to host events, training and networking opportunities.

RCSI's most recent strategy (2023-2027) affirms our commitment to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into all we do and illustrates that EDI is a strategic priority of RCSI:

- Since 2018, EDI has been included as a strategic pillar that underpins all work and relationships;
- Implementation of the EDI Policy and Action Plan is a strategic focus;
- RCSI Strategic Plan Action #17 is "Embed equality, diversity and inclusion".
- RCSI's first EDI Strategy and Gender Equality Plan (GEP) covered 2018 – 2023. RCSI's next EDI Strategy and GEP 2023 – 2027 was launched in February 2024.

Part D

1. Staff Profile and Equality Data: RCSI recognises that collecting data related to gender equality and protected characteristics is an important factor in progressing the goals of our GEP. As of December 2023, RCSI employed 1230 staff (66%F). While we have good gender balance across academic and research grades, women represent more than two-thirds of our professional services staff. RCSI collects staff demographic data through our CoreHR platform and the EDI Staff survey, which allows staff to self-declare a range of equality data. In addition, the CoreHR system allows staff to update their personal details in relation to gender identity, disability, ethnicity, civil status and family status. In 2022, a question on ethnicity was added to the EDI survey and our Vice-Chancellor (VC) supported a campaign led by Human Resources (HR) and the EDI Unit, which resulted in 90% of staff voluntarily recording their ethnicity on our staff record system CoreHR. In summer 2023, staff were also invited to update their profile information in the CoreHR system in relation to disability. Our objective is to understand the range of disabilities, seen and unseen, among our staff. In addition, a new Data Insights & Governance Group was constituted in part to support the ongoing need to collect, report and develop resources to align with student and staff populations.

2. Gender Equality & Career Pipeline - Key Career Transition Points: Ireland's Higher Education Authority's (HEA) Report on Gender Equality determined that Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) must take action and account for progress in addressing the continued gender inequality at different levels of the staffing structure in both academic and

professional streams. Measures to be addressed include job design, workload allocation, career progression, reward and recognition, performance management and recruitment and promotion. With this directive, RCSI has conducted a thorough self-assessment, consulted with stakeholders and incorporated best practice to develop a five-year GEP to end the causes of gender inequalities at RCSI. This section provides an overview of the interventions RCSI has implemented to address gender inequalities throughout key career transition points.

2.1 Recruitment: RCSI's GEP recruitment priorities aim to remove potential bias from the recruitment process as per best practice. We continually monitor recruitment practices, particularly around panels, to eliminate any potential bias in the selection process. We recognise a need for continued data-driven analysis of trends to understand where we can best make impact around equal gender representation, particularly at senior levels. RCSI has successfully implemented the following:

- Inclusion of Equality of Opportunity positive action statement in all job adverts: "We are all too aware that imposter syndrome and the confidence gap can sometimes stop fantastic candidates putting themselves forward, so please do apply - we would love to hear from you."
- We seek candidates whose experience to date has prepared them to contribute to our commitment to the "Race Equality Action Plan 2021-2024" at RCSI.
- We track and ensure 40% gender balance on recruitment panels, managed centrally by HR.
- All recruitment and promotion panel members must complete mandatory Unconscious Bias Training (UBT) and all staff are required to complete EDI training annually.
- In response to the consistent challenge of sourcing male panel members for schools and departments with predominantly female staff cohorts, HR conducted a university-wide campaign in 2021 to recruit male panel members. This led to successful engagement of 21 men, which will support continued gender balance in the recruitment process.
- Postdoctoral recruitment in 2021 shows a general gender balance at all stages of the process, with higher acceptance rates for women.

2.2 Induction: We have seen significant progress in our efforts to provide the best experience for new starters:

- Attendance at induction has steadily increased over the past four years, with 100% attendance of academic staff in 2023;
- Staff provide feedback on the induction process via a survey and satisfaction has improved from 70%F and 63%M in 2017 to 80%F and 82%M in 2021;
- In 2021, 89% of staff invited to the formal half-day HR induction attended one of the sessions;
- New employee induction now includes a presentation on EDI to increase awareness of our values, inclusive policies and practices;
- Staff portal now includes a section with information and resources for new employees;
- The VC or HR Director attends all the induction sessions.

2.3 Professional Development Plan (PDP) (Appraisal): The RCSI staff appraisal process led by HR is a significant area of success. Established in 2015, the PDP process provides staff with an opportunity to have open, honest and encouraging conversations with their

managers to discuss their career and development goals and to align their own goals to the University's strategic goals. In 2017, staff uptake of PDP was 14% male (M) and 20% female (F). Considerable institutional efforts (for example, the process is now fully online) have increased this figure to achieve 98% staff participation in PDP as of 2022. Considerable institutional efforts (for example, the process is now fully online) have increased this figure to achieve 98% staff participation in PDP as of 2022. Staff feedback on the process has been positive.

2.4 Promotions: Significant progress has been made in the past number of years to support the advancement of women leaders throughout the pipeline, with an emphasis on internal promotion as a key mechanism for advancement to senior leadership positions.

- The greatest improvement in advancement of women is seen at the most senior level of Professor from 21%F (26M and 7F) in 2017 to 33%F (30M and 15F) in 2021, exceeding our target of 25% (average Irish University benchmark is 25%). The gender balance at Associate Professor level has remained relatively unchanged from 2017 at 39%F (17M and 11F) to 38%F (18M and 11F) in 2021 (average Irish University benchmark is 35%). RCSI continues to prioritise the advancement of women to senior levels through career development and promotion.
- From 2017 – 2021, the number of women applying for promotion has remained relatively unchanged (46 from 2015 to 2017 and 55 from 2018 to 2022). We have seen a 50% increase in female Professors, with 100%F success rate at promotion from Associate Professor to Professor (47% F overall), and a high percentage of female staff promoted to Associate Professor (67%).

We link our progress on this key career transition point to action:

- HR provide a promotions workshop to staff and management each year;
- Academic Promotions Criteria is published on the staff portal intranet;
- Achieved 50% gender balance of voting members of the promotions committee;
- Inclusive statement added to promotions application form: 'Since your last promotion, since you joined RCSI, or in the last 5 years (whichever is shortest) please indicate for how many months you availed of statutory and/or University approved leave for example Maternity leave, Carer's leave, absence due to illness or injury. This information is collected to ensure equality of opportunity for staff that have taken such leave.'
- In addition, four Head of School (HoS) roles opened during the period 2017 - 2021, of which 50% were filled by females. Five Head of Department (HoD) roles opened during the period 2017 - 2021, 80% were filled by females. Upon initial review by HR to continue this positive trend, we will ensure a standardised formal appointments process for pipeline leadership roles (e.g. Deputy Head/Cycle Director) is followed for every appointment regardless of School size.
- In 2021/2022, 33 Professional, Managerial and Support Staff (PMSS) were promoted within their department or successfully applied for a new role.
- Recognising the impact of caring responsibilities, in 2022 we revised our Conference Grant Fund which can facilitate cost of childcare supports (or other costs) to support carers to attend conferences, which supports promotion eligibility more broadly. This will be reviewed for impact.

2.5 Career Progression: RCSI has invested in a wide range of career development initiatives for all staff cohorts which have made significant progress implementing bespoke career development initiatives across staff cohorts:

- Staff Development Scheme: funding support of 80% of fees to attend an RCSI postgraduate programme (5 awards), up to 50% support for external courses (3 awards), and Doctoral Funding for educators (3 awards);
- RCSI launched the Aurora Leadership Development programme for female staff in 2015. From 2018 to 2023, 57 staff members have completed the Aurora programme and half have advanced to a more senior role.
- In 2018, RCSI Graduate School of Healthcare Management, in collaboration with the 30% Club (a non-profit organisation focused on advancing gender equality in senior leadership of organisations), launched the Women in Leadership Scholarship programme.
- In 2021, the 'Positive Connections' early career academic mentoring programme was launched to address mentoring needs;
- Mentoring for Strategic Academic Recruitment (StAR) Lecturers and staff on Researcher Career Development Framework was also introduced;
- 10 women were supported to attend the Advance HE 'Women on Boards' training in 2018.
- The 2023 EDI Survey results indicate high awareness of training and development opportunities amongst staff (88%F and 84%M).

2.6 Flexible Working: RCSI has developed a Flexible Working Framework which sets out clear supports and guidance for staff and managers when agreeing a flexible working arrangement. There has been a steady growth in staff being supported to balance their work and home lives, including those with caring responsibilities. This is evidenced by an increase from an average of 57% of staff in 2017 to 92% of female staff and 94% of male staff in 2023 responding that that their Head of School/Dept/Unit would be supportive of the need to balance work with caring responsibilities, through ad hoc flexibility. RCSI policies go beyond minimum criteria to meet legislative requirements; the aim is to foster a positive culture by embedding policies that prioritise employee wellbeing. An example is the recent Code of Practice on the employee 'Right to Disconnect' which includes the Core Meeting Hours Policy and Email Usage Policy (2018). In 2021, awareness of the Core Meeting Hours Policy was 81%F and 80%M and adherence reported as 89%F and 86%M. Staff consultation with carers indicated that flexible working arrangements were essential in supporting work-life balance and reducing impacts to career progression from COVID-19.

2.7 Workload: Ongoing staff consultation processes indicate that workload impacts staff in a range of the themes, emphasising the need to prioritise workload management at an institutional level. Analysis of recent EDI Staff Surveys showed differences in experience of workload were more pronounced by role than by gender. However, workload pressure was reported by all staff groups. Academic staff and those in niche support roles reported the greatest issues with resolving workload allocation. Research staff also noted the difficulties faced by early career employees in advocating for work-life balance and in addressing any issues with a line manager (e.g. Principal Investigator) due to the power dynamics and imbalance. As a result of this ongoing feedback, RCSI has committed to developing a principles-based workload model to be embedded across the institution by 2027.

2.8 Cover and Support Before, During and After Maternity Leave: The 2023 EDI Staff Survey results indicated high satisfaction rates for both male and female staff in feeling supported by their School/Dept/Unit before (78%F and 100%M) and after family leave

(78%F and 100%M). Many RCSI initiatives contributed to this, such as the availability of a six-month teaching-free period provided to academic staff post maternity/adoptive leave. In addition, RCSI maternity retention rates are high. Positive staff experiences of returning from maternity leave were linked to having proper cover and supports in place.

2.9 Family Leave: RCSI is committed to helping balance the needs of work and family life. There is a dedicated policy page on our intranet where staff are updated on policies and initiatives. Staff are also informed of flexible working options via all-staff communications and events or through EDI networks, (e.g. the Parents & Carers Network currently has 72 members). The HR Policy Review Committee, which has an EDI representative, ensures policies are updated annually in line with best practice. Other achievements include:

- Removed tenure-qualifying criteria from our policies, enabling all staff to apply for family-friendly policies, including maternity leave, from their date of commencement with RCSI;
- Developed a Parents' Leave Policy which provides for RCSI topping up staff salary for the first 2 weeks of parents leave;
- Adapted Sick Leave Policy to provide increased flexibility for staff becoming ill during the pandemic;
- Developed a Fertility Treatment Policy
- Provision of unpaid leave options for all staff;
- Increased staff awareness of parental leave from 57%F and 43%M in 2017 to 80%F and 77%M in 2023.

2.10 Contracts: A balanced proportion of total staff hold permanent (66%F) and temporary (66%F) positions relative to the gender profile at RCSI (66%F). Generally, there is gender balance across roles and there has been a reduction in temporary academic contracts during this award period. As research roles are funded externally and linked to specific projects, RCSI issues researchers with Temporary Specific Purpose Contracts and the gender representation reflects the gender profile of this staff category.

2.11 Contract Researchers and Research Development Framework: RCSI's Research Career Development Framework is an important tool that provides post-PhD researchers with support to help them define and fulfil their personal development and career progression objectives. Each level of the framework provides guidelines in relation to research outputs, necessary and desirable experience and competencies. The framework also provides advice on the development and training opportunities that can help researchers transition to the next level. RCSI's Strategic Academic Recruitment (StAR) Programme provides an opportunity for early career academics to progress on a tenure track to an academic role starting at Lecturer level. As of December 2022, 19 StAR lecturers (47%F) have come through the programme and 14 (50%F) have progressed to academic roles.

3. Inclusivity and Respect: Creating an Inclusive Workplace Championing Gender Equality

3.1 Intersectionality: RCSI is committed to supporting the rights of all our students and staff, with a specific focus on the protected equality grounds enshrined in Irish legislation. Key achievements include:

- A range of staff and student trainings are provided which are essential to embedding

our EDI policies in practice. Trainings include, race equality, transgender rights, disability awareness, autism awareness sexual consent, and response to a disclosure of sexual violence. Participant feedback and qualitative feedback from EDI survey shapes the EDI training programme annually.

- RCSI launched three new EDI thematic action plans, for race equality, disability inclusion and ending sexual violence and harassment. These action plans contain links to our GEP for intersectional analysis;
- Pride Network events throughout the year raise staff awareness about gender identity and expression.
- A Positive Ageing Week campaign is delivered annually in October
- RCSI continues to advance intersectional data collection of staff and students, particularly relating to ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic status.
- New policies: Supporting Staff with Disabilities Policy, Menopause Policy, and Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave Policy (provides an additional 10 days paid leave)
- Enhancements to our Dignity at Work Policy to include increased emphasis on addressing sexual harassment;
- Conducted an EDI audit of staff policies in 2022;
- All EDI Forums discuss 'report and support' procedure annually;
- Gender Identity and Expression Policy launched in 2018;
- Information on reporting supports is included in EDI trainings and Bystander Intervention training launched in December 2023.

3.2 Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity: RCSI's Pride Staff Network was established in 2018 and holds monthly informal lunchtime gatherings for members as well as formal meetings and events throughout the year. Key achievements of the network include:

- Celebrations for Pride at RCSI: In 2018, RCSI partnered with TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland) for a community event before the Dublin Pride parade. Since 2022, the EDI Unit and Pride Network have collaborated with the Sports and Social Club to host a Pride BBQ event for all staff.
- Since 2022, RCSI has partnered with LGBT Ireland on their annual Healthcare Conference.
- Pronouns campaign: In 2021, the EDI Unit led a campaign encouraging staff to add their pronouns to their email signatures. Our pronoun badge campaign (a collaboration between the EDI Unit, Pride Staff network and Student Pride Society) was launched in 2023. We provide staff and students with free badges, rainbow lanyards and promotional materials on the importance of supporting correct pronoun usage, and gender expression more broadly
- World AIDS Day: In 2022 we hosted a movie screening of 'How to Tell a Secret', an Irish documentary by and about HIV+ people in Ireland. In 2023, we had a lunchtime information stand with posters and materials from HSE and health clinics on topics such as transmission, testing and U=U.
- Social media posts and employee engagement platform (Workvivo) posts to mark days of observance and LBGT+ history month.

3.3 Ethnicity: In 2021, RCSI launched the Race Equality Forum (REF). The aim of the REF is to ensure RCSI remains a positive leader and tackles racism. The REF is co-chaired by a staff member and Head of EDI, championed by a Senior Management Team member and has a voluntary membership of 43 staff and students. In 2021, the REF launched the Race

Equality Action Plan (REAP) 2021-2024, the first of its kind amongst Irish HEIs. The REAP sets out RCSI's commitment to anti-racism within the institution. The REF developed the REAP with consultation and input from staff, students and expert organisations including Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre. As of January 2024, 60% of actions in the REAP are complete, with plans for the remaining actions to be completed in the coming months. Highlights include:

- Staff and student ethnicity data collection: 90% completion of staff data on CoreHR in 2022;
- Decolonising the medical curriculum staff and student project;
- Ensuring diversity of imagery across all materials;
- Campaign to promote adding the phonetic spelling of names to email signatures;
- RCSI was a finalist for the National Diversity & Inclusion Awards Advancing Race/Ethnicity Equality Award 2024.

3.4 Disability: In 2019, RCSI established the VisABILITY Forum which is dedicated to supporting the rights of students and staff with disabilities. The Forum meets three times per year and has a membership more than 40 staff, students and external expert partners. The Forum annually celebrates international days of significance and some of the key achievements of the Forum include:

- VisABILITY Forum Action Plan approved by SMT in Spring 2023;
- Collaboration with Parents & Carers' Staff Network to deliver 'Different Not Less: Conversations on Neurodiversity event' in 2023;
- Organising training on disability awareness and autism awareness;
- AsIAm Autism Friendly HEI application submitted.

3.5 Ending Sexual Violence, Harassment and Misconduct: RCSI has a long tradition of researching and addressing sexual violence and harassment dating back to the landmark 'Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) Report' that investigated the prevalence of sexual violence in Ireland led by Professor Hannah McGee. The EDI Unit established an Ending Sexual Violence, Supporting Survivors and Promoting Consent (ESP) Forum in 2020. The ESP Forum is guided by the HEA's Framework for Consent in HEIs (Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive: Ending Sexual Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions). Key outputs of the Forum include:

- Established the Support & Report pathways for students and staff. These were reflected in the policy and support documents presented to Academic Council in April 2019 and Medical and Health Sciences Board (MHSB) in May 2019. In addition, members of the Student Welfare Office completed intensive training.
- In September 2019, the official launch of the Safe Sexual Health programme at RCSI (#RCSIGetsSECSE) coincided with the first mandatory online Consent training delivered at RCSI. All new students complete an online Consent Training programme. This programme continues to evolve, and new material and delivery was launched in 2023 to align with the HEA's Active*Consent initiative. All first-year students (in 2023, this was a cohort of 660 students) are required to complete this training and an additional self-guided programme is available for all staff and students.
- RCSI has invested significantly in Bystander Intervention training since 2018. This training was originally delivered face to face however, the new programme which has an intersectional focus is now delivered online (see Section 2 on Innovative Inclusiveness for more on RCSI's Bystander Intervention programme).

3.5.1 Speak Out : In October 2021, RCSI launched Speak Out, an online tool which provides a platform for students, staff and visitors in RCSI to safely and anonymously report incidences of misconduct, including bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour or control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Upon completing a report, the tool directs users to support services available internally, as well as public services. The purpose of this tool is to identify the incidences and issues reported anonymously in RCSI, with a long-term view to (1) inform policy and (2) create targeted educational initiatives in response to the anonymous reports recorded. Speak Out is part of RCSI's commitment to ensuring that everyone in the university community can work and learn in an environment defined by dignity and respect. Following the publication of the Speak Out National Report, RCSI published their institutional Speak Out report, the content of which was presented to key decision-making committees.

3.5.2 Staff and Student Sexual Health & Wellbeing Campaigns: In 2022, the EDI Unit in collaboration with the ESP Forum, student societies (Health & Wellbeing and Pride) as well as the Students' Union introduced an inaugural online campaign promoting sexual health and wellbeing education and positive practices. This campaign is inspired by the World Association for Sexual Health's World Sexual Health Day which is September 4th. This campaign expanded in 2023 to include bespoke campaigns for staff and students and incorporated online and in-person events. This campaign contributes to the advancement of several actions contained within the Targeted Initiatives strand of the ESP Forum Action Plan. For instance, Action 5.2: increase awareness and understanding of supports and services available, Action 4.1 measure awareness of formal and informal reporting procedures as indicated in EDI survey results, and multiple actions addressing the delivery of relevant trainings. Highlights from 2023 include:

- Adapting the University of Galway's 30-minute online Active*Consent training to a self-led training on RCSI's virtual learning environment (Moodle) available to all RCSI staff and students.
- In-person event, "The Female Orgasm: A conversion with Dr Caroline Kelleher", where Dr Kelleher addressed a variety of questions related to the female orgasm submitted by students.
- Daily posts during campaign weeks in September and October to Instagram and WorkVivo sharing educational resources and signposting to internal and external resources garnered strong engagement from all audiences.

3.6 Social Origin: In 2019, the RCSI Engage Strategy was launched and a Head of RCSI Engage and REACH Programme was appointed. The aim is to enhance human health and education by building reciprocal partnerships between RCSI staff and students and our local and national communities. Core to this mission is widening participation in higher education for traditionally underrepresented groups and the promotion of health and wellbeing. Systemic tracking of engagement has been developed to support this work. The new RCSI Engage Strategy 2023-2027 builds on all of this work and outlines how we will extend and embed our engagement and involvement activities across our teaching, learning, research, and extracurricular activities. It will drive the development of a range of reciprocal programmes that will benefit our local community, patients and the wider public nationally, while enriching our student and staff experience and contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

3.7 Representation of Women and Men on Key Decision-Making Bodies and Committees: RCSI has introduced a policy of 40% minimum gender representation on key institutional committees. An audit conducted in 2022 identified that 10 out of 23 key decision-making bodies or committees are gender balanced. Of the remaining 13, 6 are female-dominated and 7 are male-dominated. For key, senior, institutional, decision-making committees, many of which include representation from external members to the University, 40% gender representation remains the goal. However, for internal staff-only committees, targets reflect the gender representation of RCSI, at 66%F, to reduce overburdening under-represented groups.

- In 2020, the gender balance shifted on our SMT from 30%F to 36%F (7M, 4F).
- The 2023 EDI Staff Survey results indicated 69%F and 76%M respondents agree there is sufficient diverse representation (e.g. gender; ethnicity; age; etc.) in internal activities (i.e. interview panels, committees, working groups, presentations at conferences/ seminars).

3.8 Gender Pay Gap: RCSI published a gender pay gap (GPG) report in December 2023. Positively, our GPG has fallen by 3% over the past five years. RCSI has put in place specific measures to address this in terms of recruitment, promotion, family-friendly policies and career development. RCSI is also aware that a change of gender in senior clinical/leadership appointments can skew our figures and indeed GPG considerably, therefore we are proceeding with a sustainable progression plan over the next number of years. All the actions identified are ongoing and, in the meantime, RCSI is committed to reporting annually on progress made.

3.9 Role Models: RCSI is intentional about ensuring representation and visibility of women and other minoritised groups in our events, publicity and outreach. In 2023, 88%F and 85%M of EDI Staff Survey respondents agreed there are people in RCSI they identify with as role models. Activities to improve role model visibility include:

- 139 strategic communications campaigns featured a female academic or researcher as the case study, 138 featured a male academic or researcher and 55 featured a mixed group;
- The RCSI MyHealth expert directory is a list of RCSI experts available to engage with the media. At present, 37.5% are female and a project is currently underway aimed at increasing the number of female members;
- Continued recognition of pioneering women through the Emily Winifred Dickson Award (this RCSI award recognises women who have made outstanding contributions to their field);
- In March 2019, RCSI's Women on Walls campaign in partnership with Accenture launched eight portraits of historical female leaders in healthcare (see Section 2 on Innovative Inclusiveness);
- PROGRESS Women in Surgery Fellowship, Ireland's first Fellowship for women surgeons, was launched by RCSI in 2019;
- RCSI supported the establishment of Women in Surgery Africa (WiSA) across 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and provides an annual bursary for WiSA through the RCSI COSECSA (College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa) Collaboration Programme;
- In March 2020, RCSI unveiled a new collection of nine contemporary photographic

portraits of leading female academic staff at RCSI;
- RCSI renamed its primary 'Harvard-Style' video conferencing room in honour of Dr Mary Emily Dowson, the first female licentiate of RCSI. RCSI's microbiology laboratory at Beaumont Hospital was named after Professor Ellen Moorhouse, RCSI's foundation Professor of Microbiology;
- Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, delivered the Carmichael Lecture and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship in 2022;
- In December 2022, RCSI unveiled new sculptural portraits commissioned by the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery to celebrate two pioneering women in this field: Florence Nightingale and Elizabeth O'Farrell.

4. Awareness & Communication

4.1 Communications

The EDI Unit's communications channels include: quarterly e-newsletter (352 subscribers), active Instagram (590 followers) and X (formerly Twitter) (1,491 followers), weekly posts to RCSI's internal social media platform (WorkVivo), regular updates in RCSI's bi-weekly leadership e-newsletter, digital screens and physical posters on campus, a dedicated web page on RCSI's website (rcsi.com/equality) and a dedicated resources and trainings page in our virtual learning environment (Moodle).

The EDI Unit supported various communication campaigns at important all-staff events to encourage maximum engagement in our self-assessment and consultation processes. Communication with students regarding gender equality and RCSI's EDI activity and progress was also conducted throughout the year during student orientation (Sept/Oct 2022), EDI guest lectures (Nov 2022, Feb 2023), SU meetings, and on social media. Impact and engagement is also evidenced by:
- Traffic to the EDI section on RCSI's website increased from 915 visits in 2018 to 7,371 visits in 2023.
- Over 336 Workvivo posts dedicated to EDI initiatives, events or conversations have been shared.

4.2 Education & Training

The EDI Unit facilitates and oversees education and trainings as one of our strategic aims. Annually, all staff are required to complete a one-hour, online, self-led EDI training addressing a range of topics including equality and human rights theory, bias, bystander intervention, how to become involved in EDI activities and supports available to all staff at RCSI. The table below highlights the impact and variety of in-person trainings the Unit has facilitated since its inception in 2017.

Time Period	Number of trainings	Number of attendees (total)	Notable Trainings Delivered
2018	>12	>300	Unconscious Bias, Trans 101, Access, Neurodiversity and Cultural Competency
2019 - 2020	>10	>470	Bystander Intervention; Irish Sign Language;
2020 - 2021	12	>1000	Consent Matters, Awareness and Disclosure Training, EDI in HE E-Learning Tool

2021 - 2022	8	>550	Race Equality, Autism Awareness, Consent Matters
2022 - 2023	12	>770	Bystander Intervention Training, Race Equality Training; Active*Consent

4.3 Events

The EDI Unit has delivered a wide range of events since 2017 and pivoted to online events during COVID-19. Today, the EDI Unit hosts both in-person, online and hybrid events regularly to recognise days of significance and implement our intersectional gender equality actions. The EDI Unit has a dedicated Events and Communications Coordinator who is supported by team members, staff and students.

Time Period	Number of Events	Number of attendees (total)	Notable Events
2018	34	>600	Athena Swan Bronze Award party; Pride; International Men's Day; Intergenerational Day as part of Positive Ageing Week
2019 - 2020	36	>500	Women on Walls portrait reveal for International Women's Day; Appreciating Culture Series
2020 - 2021	9	>400	International Men's Day; Women's Network Event
2021- 2022	>5	>500	Launch of Race Equality Action Plan (REAP); Speak Out
2022 - 2023	25	>800	International Women's Day; Different, Not Less Neurodiversity; Multicultural Network Festive Gathering;

4.4 National and International Collaborations

The EDI Unit has partnered and collaborated with a number of external organisations since 2017 to ensure interventions are guided by experts and incorporate best practice. Within Ireland, the EDI Unit has worked closely with the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC), Family Carers Ireland, TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland), Accenture, Business to Arts, AsIAm, BelongTo, AHEAD, Age Action, Advance HE, Disability Federation Ireland, Enable Ireland, the Irish Deaf Society, 30% Club, the HEA and LGBT Ireland. RCSI also collaborates with Irish Higher Education Institutes such as Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, Institute of Art, Design and Technology on research projects LIBRA (more detail in next section), Diverse*Active Consent (more detail in next section), and Engaging Men in Gender Equality. At the European level, the EDI Unit is currently a member of the Horizon Europe funded Inspire Community of Practice for Intersectional Gender Equality Practice and the EDI Network for the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (UK and Ireland). The aims of these projects are to share best practice, spotlight relevant projects and discuss common issues.

Award criterion 2: Innovative Inclusiveness

The applicant should demonstrate the impact of innovative actions implemented under its inclusive GEP - i.e. a GEP addressing intersections between gender and at least two other social categories[3]. Examples of such innovative actions are such as, for example, new ideas or new tools not tested elsewhere, advanced participatory approaches, innovative partnerships, or else targeted innovative actions such as actions addressing the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality and inclusiveness, support schemes for endangered researchers, etc.

Under this criterion, the applicant could answer the following guiding questions:

a) How does the proposal demonstrate the impact of innovative actions implemented under its inclusive GEP? Please provide concrete examples of ideas/activities/processes/tools, as relevant, highlighting the innovative aspects and their results.

b) Are all the reported innovative measures inclusive?

c) Does the proposal address intersections of inequalities with other social categories, such as racial or ethnic origin, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ) or disability, as relevant, in the organisation context and culture? If so, how and with what results?

[3] Examples of such social categories include racial or ethnic origin, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ), or disability

Bystander Intervention: Bystander Intervention has been implemented internationally, and its efficacy is widely documented in academic literature. Bystander Intervention training aims to support third-party witnesses to stand up to inappropriate attitudes and behaviors (to include sexually inappropriate conduct as well as others such as racism). Thirty-six students were trained in the first workshops in February 2019, a further forty students were trained in September 2019. Following COVID-19, the training pivoted to an online, self-led 2.5 hour module and the updated programme expands the scope of bystander intervention training, using the same learning principles to address and prevent misconduct across the ten equality grounds, for example, racism, homophobia and ableism, as well as sexual and gender-based violence. Based on feedback from our focus groups, we recognised the need to develop content with a healthcare focus. Three filmed scenarios were created, set in a GP clinic, a pharmacy and at a student party. These were written specifically for the programme and filmed on site in RCSI. These scenarios provide examples of bystander intervention in action in both healthcare and social scenarios. An important element was the creation of an Immersive Virtual Scenario in Collaboration with RCSI's Health Professions Education Centre (HPEC). The virtual patient scenario uses artificial intelligence (AI) to simulate a conversation that takes place on a hospital ward with members of a multi-disciplinary team and demonstrates a number of different ways of intervening when witnessing discrimination.

Diverse Active*Consent was a collaborative research project, coordinated by RCSI and undertaken in partnership with the **University of Galway**'s Active* Consent team and the **Institute of Art, Design and Technology** (IADT). The project received €50,000 in funding

and aimed to adapt the current Active*Consent programme (sexual consent training) and create new resources that would diversify content, focusing in particular on inclusion of ethnic, sexual and gender diversity. A needs assessment was carried out with students and staff across the three participating institutions, totalling two staff focus groups (n=14) and four student focus groups (n=19). The findings informed the writing and development of four short animated scenes, working in partnership with two professional animators (alumni of IADT). One of the animated scenarios was included in the national Active*Consent training programme, rolled out across seventeen HEIs in Ireland. The other scenarios are available for circulation under the Active* Consent resource suite, and under Creative Commons licence, owned by RCSI, Active* Consent and IADT.

LIBRA: The LIBRA project was a multi-institutional endeavour, led by RCSI in partnership with **UCC** and **TU Dublin** and awarded €50,000 from the HEA's Gender Equality Enhancement Fund. LIBRA's goal is to train and empower student leaders to promote gender equality and challenge gender inequality. The needs assessment informing the programme included a comprehensive scoping review, nine expert interviews, six student focus groups with twenty-nine participants and a student survey circulated across the three partner institutions. The programme used Simulation-Based Education (SBE), in collaboration with actors, to create six immersive scenarios in which learners could practice gender equality skills in a safe environment. Students' confidence in their ability to communicate, be actively aware and challenge gender equalities matters increased post-intervention.

RCSI's Pronoun Badge Campaign builds on previous initiatives to raise awareness of and celebrate gender diversity, such as the Gender Identity and Expression Policy (2018) and our campaign to add pronouns to email signatures in 2021. This is a way to raise awareness of gender identity and show allyship with our trans and non-binary colleagues and students. This project has been a collaboration with the student Pride Society and staff Pride Network, and the idea came from our students. We also have rainbow lanyards available and postcards with information about pronouns. Wearing a pronoun badge or rainbow lanyard is optional, we want everyone to have a choice and to feel comfortable. This campaign was endorsed by our Senior Management Team and delivered to all staff and students as well as across our teaching campus at 123 St Stephen's Green and clinical sites Beaumont and Connolly Hospitals.

The EDI & Library Allyship Collection supports RCSI's goal to embed EDI across everything we do and nurturing respectful, dignified, positive, and safe learning and working environments. The collection has been developed from readings recommended by: RCSI Pride Society, RCSI Pride Network, Anti-Racism book club, the RCSI EDI Unit and the Race Equality Forum (Link to the Collection).

EDI Vice Chancellor Award: The Vice Chancellor's Awards (VCA's) realise one of RCSI's key strategic goals to create a positive culture at RCSI, building on our stated values of respect, collaboration, scholarship and innovation. The VCAs launched in 2022, a new peer-to-peer staff appreciation programme which reflects our diversifying workforce and culture and aligns to recognition programmes in the wider university sector. The intention of the new awards programme is to recognise staff who bring our values to life, to promote the behaviours and leadership competencies demonstrated by both individuals and teams, and in general, to foster a feeling of greater inclusivity and goodwill amongst staff. There are six

award categories open to staff to nominate their fellow colleagues. These are: The Positive Leader Award (Individual Award); The Team Impact Award (Team Award); Outstanding Colleague Award (Individual Award); The Rising Star Award (Individual Award); The EDI Champion Award (Individual Award); and the Sustainable Development Goals Champion Award (Individual or Team Award).

Student Engagement: RCSI has a formal, funded Student Engagement and Partnership (StEP) programme that empowers staff and students to work with and learn from each other, with students, staff and the RCSI community benefitting as a result. The EDI Unit funds a number of student partnership projects in support of equality, diversity and inclusion every year. One recent project resulted in the development of a bank of images representing clinical presentations on dark skin tones for incorporation into the RCSI curricula to better prepare students to accurately recognise and diagnose medical conditions in patients identifying as members of minoritized groups. Another project introduced greater diversity into clinical cases by proactively recruiting diverse actors and surface models to support clinical case teaching.

Menopause Policy: In 2023, RCSI introduced a Menopause Policy to support staff who are going through the stages of perimenopause and menopause and to set out guidelines for individuals and managers to have open conversations to identify the right supports. RCSI was recognised for our pioneering and ground-breaking work to support menopausal and perimenopausal women at work by The Menopause Hub in partnership with Great Place to Work. RCSI won the 'Best Education Sector Company' category in October 2023 for this initiative.

Domestic Violence & Abuse Leave Policy: The RCSI Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave Policy was launched on 2 November 2022. The policy was developed through engagement and consultation with a number of different resources and organisations including Women's Aid and Men's Aid. It outlines that RCSI recognises and will deal sensitively with any employee who may be experiencing domestic violence and abuse and provides clear guidance on the supports, internally and externally, that are available. The policy outlines a range of appropriate reasonable accommodations and supports including adjustments to working arrangements and dedicated leave to support staff members experiencing domestic violence and abuse. The Domestic Violence and Abuse Leave Policy and RCSI's other policies help to make RCSI a safe and welcoming place of study and work.

National Heritage Week 2023: The RCSI Library forged a unique collaboration with the Irish Men's Sheds Association to create bespoke cabinets for the display of rare historical material from RCSI Heritage Collections. The RCSI Library launched a programme of activity to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of pioneering Irish surgeon Abraham Colles. As well as a virtual exhibition exploring his life and legacy, the Library also created a pop-up exhibit featuring rarely seen archival material from the Abraham Colles papers in RCSI's collections to share with visitors to RCSI during Heritage Week. RCSI needed to source new cabinetry for this purpose and, with the support of the Heritage Council, realised this objective in a way that reflected our university's commitment to health and wellbeing and to community engagement.

Inspire: For International Men's Day in 2023, the EDI Unit delivered a celebration of this international day of significance through an innovative collaboration with RCSI's Inspire

Programme which included sponsoring a five-a-side football tournament, lunch and a talk on men's mental health. RCSI launched Inspire in 2016 to promote the benefits of health and wellbeing to staff of the organisation. RCSI Inspire is based on four health pillars: Physical, Nutritional, Mental and Occupational health. This involves the amalgamation of existing exercise activities, with a number of new initiatives that will safeguard the overall health and wellbeing of RCSI staff in the workplace.

Age-Friendly University: In 2019, RCSI was recognised as an 'Age-Friendly University' and is a member of the Age-Friendly University Global Network. The University has developed and is currently implementing an action plan as part of this work. The Age Friendly Staff Network manages and oversees the implementation of the action plan.

Lab Safari: To celebrate Science Week Ireland in November 2018, the Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics (MCT) at RCSI opened its doors and invited members of the public to experience one of Ireland's most advanced research centres. Almost 50 young people from schools all around Dublin attended the fully-booked Lab Safari. The event was developed to encourage young people to consider a career in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine) by sharing the passion and enthusiasm for research at RCSI. MCT were particularly keen to motivate young women and girls to attend, to promote the full participation of girls and women in science and encouragingly the ratio of number of females to the number of males was 4:1 amongst attendees on the evening.

30% Club Scholarships: In April 2018, RCSI's Institute of Leadership and the 30% Club launched the HEI Scholarship Programme and awarded three scholarships as part of ongoing efforts to improve gender diversity in healthcare. The scholarships, valued at €5,750 for the Professional Diplomas and €12,500 for the Masters programme. In 2022, RCSI expanded its scholarship offering to include the Professional Diploma in Positive Health, which increases the total offering to 4 scholarships awarded annually.

Women on Walls: In 2018, RCSI, in partnership with Accenture and Business to Arts, commissioned eight new portraits of extraordinary female RCSI leaders for display in the historically significant Boardroom on St. Stephen's Green. The key objective of the partnership was to build on RCSI's and Accenture's commitment to promoting and progressing gender equality in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) and work to highlight strong female role models in these fields. Women on Walls seeks to engage women and girls interested in pursuing a career in traditionally male dominated fields, serving as an inspiration for the next generation.

RCSI launched the portraits, podcast series and dedicated website (https://women.rcsi.com/) in conjunction with International Women's Day celebrations in March 2019 with keynote address by former Minister of State for Higher Education of Ireland Mary Mitchell O'Connor and attended by more than 200 family members, friends and RCSI leaders. They are now part of the RCSI Portrait Collection and underline RCSI commitment to gender equality in healthcare, improving the visibility of role models and creating a lasting cultural legacy for Ireland.

Media coverage and public tours have raised awareness of both RCSI's and Accenture's gender equality initiatives to a new and diverse audience. In 2019, more than 2,000 people attended the launch events, over 2 million users engaged across social media platforms and 250 people attended public tours in the first month.

2. OTHER

2.1 Ethics

Ethics: *Describe ethics issues linked to your application (if any) and the measures you took/intend to take to solve/avoid them. Please consult the guidance on* "How to complete an ethics self-assessment" f*or information on the different ethical issues to be considered.*

The EDI Unit employed anonymous online surveys and in-person and online focus groups in GEP 2018-2023 to engage stakeholders. Ethics issues arising from these activities include:

Use of Human Participants: Data collection, surveys and focus groups involved multiple groups (Section b. above). Aligned with RCSI Ethics guidelines and policies, all studies had ethics approval from the RCSI Research Ethics Committee (REC) and informed participant consent. We prioritised participant rights and privacy. We applied RCSI's Research Integrity guidelines which are aligned to the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland. The methodology was designed with transparency and an inclusive research design to ensure any potential biases in the research methods were recognised and addressed. This ensured that our research was culturally sensitive and applicable across diverse groups and communities, and that the dignity and rights of the individuals were protected. Where data subjects were from underrepresented groups, we challenged power dynamics effectively, creating an inclusive environment where all voices, especially those of marginalised gender groups, were valued.

Informed Consent and Autonomy: Our methodology used robust measures for obtaining informed consent, ensuring that all participants fully understood the nature, purpose, and potential implications of their involvement. They participated voluntarily and had the right to withdraw at any stage. Participants explicitly consented to discussing gender-related issues. Transparency regarding data collection, management, and sharing ensured the trustworthiness of the research and safeguarded the well-being of those involved.

Protection of (sensitive) personal data (including reuse of previously collected/generated data): Only anonymised data was analysed and reported on. Anonymisation, secure data handling practices, ethical approval, ongoing compliance with evolving ethical standards, transparency, accountability, and respect for individual rights reflected our dedication to conducting studies that meet the highest ethical standards.

Empowering Marginalised Voices: Our GEP work empowered marginalised voices and created strategies to elevate and amplify the perspectives of underrepresented groups. We ensured that their experiences and needs were acknowledged, and incorporated into the RCSI agenda. Ensuring fair representation and understanding of the experiences of individuals with diverse gender identities, ethnicities, disabilities, and social backgrounds was crucial. Meaningful participation and knowledge co-creation were used, such as the inclusion of minority representation in advisory groups.

Anti-Discrimination and Equality: The foremost ethical consideration in the objectives of our EDI team is the commitment to equitable outcomes. All of our GEP goals actively contributed to dismantling systemic barriers, promoting inclusivity, and fostering equal opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their background, race, gender, sexuality, and other dimensions of diversity. The methodology accounted for the unique challenges and opportunities faced by individuals with intersecting identities.

Outcomes, Impact and Ethical Dissemination of Results: The outcomes of the EDI surveys were shared during Town Halls, presented to SMT, EDIC and Council, and at a dedicated information session for all staff. Tailored communication strategies to diverse audiences were facilitated to ensure that findings are disseminated in ways that are culturally competent, linguistically inclusive, and accessible to individuals with varying levels of expertise.

Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations: Our protocols and procedures met the relevant national and international laws and best practice rules, standards and guidelines as laid out by host country law, EU law, and EU directives. They respected fundamental ethical principles, including those reflected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, and the European Convention on Human Rights and its supplementary Protocols. They were conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki in its latest version, and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

Data Protection: The use and transfer of participant data is covered by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) (GDPR). We protect individuals concerning their right to privacy and processing of personal data, including sensitive data and exchange of such data in compliance with the GDPR. The intent with which any data is accessed and used was lawful, fair and transparent, and for specified explicit and legitimate purposes. Data collection was limited to what is adequate and relevant to the research project's purpose. Data anonymised and appropriate technical and organizational measures are in place to protect against unlawful or unauthorised processing and accidental loss or destruction. The institutional Data Protection Officer verifies compliance with the GDPR and national data protection laws. Where data is needed to be transferred to a non-EU country, this will only occur if the country has satisfactory legislation or practices in place to ensure data protection adequacy status.

2.2 Security

Security: *Describe security issues linked to your application (if any) and the measures you took/intend to take to solve/avoid them. Indicate if any of the information is/should be EU-classified (Decision 2015/444).*

Not applicable.

3. GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

You must support your application with the link to the webpage where your GEP has been published and can be accessed as a publicly available document signed by the top management.

Webpage: https://www.rcsi.com/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/athena-swan
Document: RCSI 2018 – 2023 GEP (see pages 44 – 87)

4. DECLARATIONS

Double funding	
Information concerning other prizes for this project ⚠ *Please note that there is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies calls). Applications that*	**YES/NO**

have already received an EU prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities	(if NO, add details)
We confirm that to our best knowledge neither the application as a whole nor any parts of it have benefitted from any other EU prize.	Yes
We confirm that to our best knowledge neither the application as a whole nor any parts of it are (nor will be) submitted for any other EU prize.	Yes

ANNEXES

The applicant must upload the latest fully implemented Gender Equality Plan (GEP).