

Maynooth University Implementation of the Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty

Address Step

October 2024

Introduction

Maynooth University (MU) sees it as vital that we respond through positive actions to the objective of greater inclusion, as stated in our [Strategic Plan 2023 -2028](#). We have a reputation for authentic, strengths-based access initiatives, supporting participation, engagement, and progression for all students. We will build on this legacy and on our commitment to social justice to ensure that every member of our University community has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of who they are and where they come from.

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

(1) A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to:

- ⇒ Eliminate discrimination;
- ⇒ Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services; and
- ⇒ Protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

S42.2 (a) and (b) establish the steps that public bodies should follow, in regard to implementing the Duty

- (2) (a) set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan (howsoever described) an **assessment** of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to **address** those issues, and
- (b) **report** in a manner that is accessible to the public on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report (howsoever described).

Based on the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission [Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#) guide¹, we have summarised the three steps required in terms of:

- ⇒ *Assess Step*: Identify equality and human rights issues relevant to the purpose and function of the organisation. [MU Assess Step can be found here](#).
- ⇒ *Address Step*: Identify the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address equality and human rights issues. *This document constitutes the MU Address Step.*
- ⇒ *Report Step*: Report on developments and achievements in implementing the Duty in a manner that is accessible to the public. [MU Report Step can be found here](#).

¹ Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019) [Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#).

Address Step - MU Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Implementation Plan

The following is the MU Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty) Implementation Plan outlining our approach to ensure policies, plans and actions are in place to address the human rights and equality issues that are relevant to the functions and purpose of the university.

The role of the Governing Authority: to be familiar with the Duty, its requirements, and MU's ambitions for its implementation; to have oversight of its implementation in the development and review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies in MU.

Action Number	Action	Responsible	Timeframe
1.	A report on MU's progress on the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty will be provided annually to Governing Authority via the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Committee (EDIC).	VPED with EDI Office	Annually

The role of management: to be familiar with the Duty, its requirements, and MU's ambitions for its implementation; to promote implementation of the Duty during development and review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies; to establish a working group to drive its implementation.

Action Number	Action	Responsible	Timeframe
2.	UE will establish a standing working group on the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.	University Executive	Q4 2024
3.	In the lead up to the development of the strategic plan, MU will review and update the Assess Step – 'Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues', review progress made in implementing the Duty, and identify further steps as necessary.	University Executive	2027

The role of the Duty Working Group: A cross-organisational working group provides a key driver for implementation of the Duty and is recommended by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. The Address Step of the Duty is an ongoing obligation of MU and it should be regularly used in the development and review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies.

Action Number	Action	Responsible	Timeframe
4.	The Duty Working Group chaired by the VPED, will consult with UE and the Director of Governance to produce an annual list of initiatives to be looked at	Duty Working Group	Annual

	through the Duty lens, including the development and review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies.		
5.	The Duty Working Group will develop a MU step-by-step toolkit for implementation of the Duty in the development and review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies, and a summary sheet template outlining the steps taken to align with the Duty.	Duty Working Group	Q1 2025

Monitoring progress: The Duty Working Group will identify steps that could be taken to strengthen equality data systems to better monitor implementation of the Duty and identify output and outcome indicators which enable implementation of the Duty and progress under the Duty to be monitored.

Action Number	Action	Responsible	Timeframe
6.	The Duty Working Group will monitor implementation of the Duty and progress under the Duty and produce an annual progress report for UE and GA.	Duty Working Group	Q2 2025

Increasing Awareness: MU will support staff and students to build familiarisation with the Duty and its requirements and the ambition of MU for its implementation. The aim is to encourage the university community to consider its day to day working through a Duty lens and to celebrate progress being achieved in relation to equality and human rights in MU.

Action Number	Action	Responsible	Timeframe
7.	Information on the Duty will be included in the online student orientation.	VPED with VPSL	Starting Q3 2025 and then ongoing
8.	Information on the Duty will be included in staff induction.	VPED with HR	Ongoing
9.	The EDI Office will publish a sway to keep students and staff informed about the Duty and progress under the Duty.	EDI Office	Q1 2025 and then ongoing

Provision of training: MU will provide access to training on the Duty and its requirements for those responsible for the development and review of plans, policies, programmes and strategies, to ensure a common and high standard of implementation of the Duty.

Action Number	Action	Responsible	Timeframe
10.	The IHREC Equality and Human Rights in the Public Service eLearning module will be circulated to all staff to inform them of their obligations under the Duty and will be a key focus for university leaders.	EDI Office	Q4 2024