



<b>Code</b>	QA409
<b>Title</b>	Positive Action Policy
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<b>Approved By</b>	University Management Team

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## **1. Policy Statement**

Our university believes that embracing diversity, inclusion and equality benefits the University as well as our employees and our students. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own background, work style, distinct capabilities, experience, and characteristics to their work, providing equal opportunity to achieve full potential. We recognise that our talented and diverse workforce is a key component to supporting our university's success and it reflects the diversity of our students.

As an equal opportunity employer, our university is committed to providing and promoting a workplace environment that supports equality, diversity, and inclusion, and creating an open and inclusive culture where everyone feels valued.

## **2. Policy Purpose**

Our university is committed to an inclusive working environment which respects diversity of characteristics, including but not limited to sexual orientation, age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, civil status, family status, religious beliefs, membership of the Traveller Community, personality, and thinking style. We will endeavour to ensure that all policies, procedures, and practices give everyone equality of opportunities, in relation to access to employment, conditions of employment, training or experience for, or in relation to, employment, promotion or secondments.

We recognise that a diversity of approaches is required to support equality of opportunity.

Our University's Strategic Plan 2020-2025, EDI Strategy 2020-2025 and Gender Equality Action Plan 3 2021-2024 commit to substantially reducing the University's gender pay gap. Our university has been publishing its gender pay gap statistics since 2019. Addressing the gender pay gap and areas of underrepresentation within the University are matters of high priority for our university. Positive Action involves adopting or maintaining measures with a view to seeking to ensure equality in practice. Positive Action allows for the adoption of measures which provide for specific advantages so as to make it easier for an under-represented group to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional careers.

Having reviewed the evidence provided by:

- Gender Pay Gap reports;
- Academic Promotions data;
- Recruitment data; and
- Our HEA Staff Profile return,

we have concluded that stronger interventions are required to meet our university's objectives with regard to gender equality.

We also recognise the potential need for intervention on wider grounds, such as disability, race and ethnicity. We will promptly undertake a review to establish the evidence and data that will provide a basis for such interventions as required by law.

### **3. Policy Scope and Status**

This policy applies to all employees of our university as well as potential new employees and recruitment candidates.

This policy covers organisational culture, access to employment, terms and conditions of employment, training and development, promotion, pay and benefits and performance management and appraisals. The policy supports a commitment to inclusive recruitment and promotion.

### **4. When is Positive Action Permissible?**

Positive action should only be undertaken with a view to seeking to ensure equality in practice between all genders in working life. Before positive action measures are adopted, it must be demonstrated that one gender is underrepresented. Once this aim is achieved, any measures introduced will no longer be permissible. Our university will also aim to introduce additional measures to support underrepresentation across other equality grounds where applicable.

Any positive action measure must comply with the general principle of proportionality and must be within the limits of what is appropriate and necessary to achieve the aim in view.

### **5. Proportionate Measures**

The following positive action measures are measures that our university will adopt to address gender equality where legally appropriate. The measures outlined below will also be considered to support underrepresentation across other equality grounds.

- The introduction of trained observers to boards of assessors, shortlisting boards and promotions boards to eliminate unconscious bias. External observers will be used particularly in the areas of underrepresentation. Internal observers will be trained for use for other competitions on a case-by-case basis.
- The potential appointment of external independent interview board chairs engaged through the Public Appointments Service for all leadership posts, and in underrepresented areas.
- The use of executive search companies for senior level posts to ensure that appropriately qualified under-represented groups are engaged and encouraged to apply.
- Regular reviewing by trained personnel of job specifications and promotion schemes to ensure our university is observing best practice in inclusive recruitment having regard to equality legislation.
- Engagement of trained marketing individuals to ensure greater reach through social media, LinkedIn and media outlets which are likely to be accessed by under-represented groups.
- Enhanced unconscious bias training, with an annual refresher required for all staff who sit on interview or promotion boards.

- The shortlisting of all qualified underrepresented applicants who meet the essential criteria for shortlisting.
  - Appointment of inclusive recruitment champions to build culture and accountability across campus.
  - Offer flexible working where feasible, including by advertising vacancies with the option of applying on a part-time, flexible, or job-share basis.
  - Use legally compliant software to remove unconscious bias from the screening process.
  - Hold places on training courses for people within the under-represented areas, for example Leadership and management training programmes.
  - Targeted networking opportunities for under-represented areas.
- Schemes with preferences over a competitor of the opposite sex, provided that the candidates possess equivalent merits and where the candidates are subjected to an objective assessment which takes account of the specific personal situations of all the candidates.
  - Regimes prescribing that posts in academia are to be filled with at least the same proportion of the underrepresented community as reflected by the graduates and the holders of higher degrees in the discipline in question.
- Ensure support measures for staff throughout their career journey through data driven targets where we have identified underrepresentation in:
    - Leadership;
    - Committee membership;
    - Access to training;
    - Performance, Management, and Development System;
    - Promotions.
- Provide opportunities to underrepresented areas to learn more about particular types of work opportunities within our university.
  - Provide training opportunities in work areas or sectors for underrepresented groups, for example work placements/apprenticeship programmes.
  - Provide bursaries to obtain qualifications in a profession such as engineering for members of the group whose participation in that profession might be disproportionately low.
  - Carry out outreach work such as raising awareness of public appointments within the community.
  - Work with schools, for example but not limited to inviting students from groups whose participation in the workplace is disproportionately low to spend a day at the university.

## **6. Implementing Positive Action Measures Lawfully**

When implementing any positive action measures, to comply with the law, our university will ensure that:

- it is undertaken only where one gender is demonstrably under-represented;
- candidates will be subjected to an objective assessment which takes account of their specific personal situation;
- in the event of equal suitability, a candidate from an under-represented gender may be appointed unless reasons specific to the candidate from another gender tilt the balance in their favour;
- priority will not be afforded to a candidate from an under-represented gender in circumstances where they are not as qualified as their counterparts from another gender;
- it avoids giving automatic and unconditional priority to one gender; and
- it can show that the requirement of proportionality is satisfied.

## **7. Supporting & monitoring the measures**

We will conduct:

- Unconscious bias training;
- Positive action briefing sessions;
- Training on creating clear job specifications which would include clear essential criteria;
- Refresher unconscious bias training for those who have not undertaken same in the last 12 months;
- Periodic auditing of the shortlisting process; and
- Recruitment competition reporting.

## **8. Modelling**

We will model interventions to determine possible impacts on the gender pay gap. This will be supported through external expertise initially with the objective of building capacity within our database to generate these insights internally in the future.

## 9. Policy Implementation, Governance and Review

The implementation of the policy rests with the University Management Team with devolved oversight of specific actions assigned to the UMT Gender Pay Gap working group underpinned by legal advice. Actions will be progressed under the auspices of Human Resources Office and/or the Office of the Vice President for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion as appropriate. The progression of actions such as schemes, regimes and modelling which require additional analysis and consideration will be brought to UMT for approval prior to implementation. Approval will be sought from Údarás via as per the institutional governance requirements.

The impact of positive action measures will be reported on a biannual basis using evidence from the actions taken in conjunction with:

- Gender Pay Gap reports;
- Academic Promotions data;
- Recruitment data; and
- HEA Staff Profile return.

Actions implemented under the auspices of the policy will be monitored and reviewed for impact annually. The policy is subject to the usual review timelines under the quality assurance policy review cycle.

## 10. Responsibilities

<i>Name</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
President, University of Galway	Policy Owner
All Staff	Compliance with policy

## 11. Related Documents/Policies

- UMT Gender Pay Gap Working Group Terms of Reference
- QA119 Flexible Working Hours Scheme
- QA180 Hybrid Working Policy
- QA152 Equal Opportunities Policy
- QA146 Recruitment and Selection Policy