

EDI in Higher Education

Roots and Practice

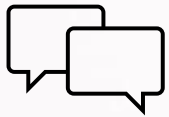
Presented by
Simon Gray (UCD)
Anne-Marie Curtin (UCC)



Join the SIG

Overview of today

- Roots of EDI → philosophical, statutory
- EDI in practice in Irish Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) → philosophical, on the ground
- Discussion → Could EDI be as seriously threatened in Irish HEIs as it is in HEIs in the USA?
- Getting involved → EDI training and opportunities



Roots of EDI (philosophical)

- **EDI** therefore **B**

- **B = belonging**: what a student feels ...
- ... if the HEI practices **E**quality, **D**iversity and **I**nclusion

- “A comprehensive and holistic approach to EDI”

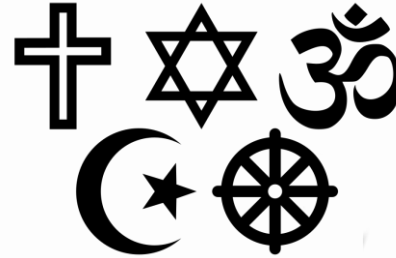
(Vaccaro & Newman, 2022)

- Comprehensive: messaging, multiple methods of engagement (UDL)
- Holistic: everyone is culturally competent, trained, on board



Roots of EDI (philosophical)

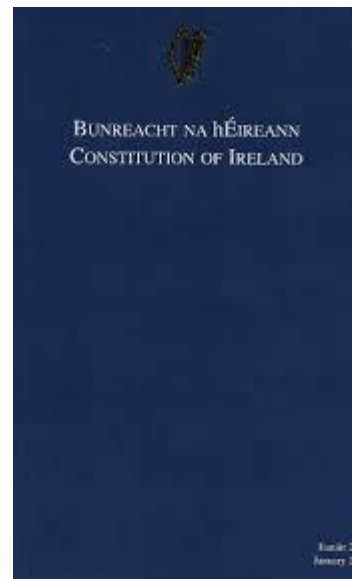
- “EDI” = “just be sound”
 - But why should we “just be sound”?
 - Rooted in every spiritual belief
- Philosophical models
 - Virtue ethics (*just be sound*)
 - Consequentialism (*be sound so that...*)
 - Deontological ethics (*do the sound thing*)
- Kantian ethics
 - Immanuel Kant; Categorical Imperative
 - Individual human (*free, rational, therefore an end*)
 - Humans together (*kingdom of ends*)



With such deep intellectual roots, why isn't EDI “comprehensive and holistic”? Why is it vulnerable to attack?



Roots of EDI (legal)



Also: **Disability Act**
(access to services,
public buildings),
Universities Act
(Equality Policy)

"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world," (1948)

"And seeking to promote the common good, with due observance of Prudence, Justice and Charity, so that the dignity and freedom of the individual may be assured, true social order attained, the unity of our country restored, and concord established with other nations, Do hereby adopt, enact, and give to ourselves this Constitution."
(1937)

Human Rights / Discrimination / Equality

Examples of human rights
(as identified in the UN
Conventions, the Irish
Constitution and Irish law:

- Life
- Liberty
- Education (2nd level/18)
- Employment
- Privacy
- Freedom of Religion
- Freedom of Expression
- Freedom of Association
- Working hours, annual leave, joining a union, whistle blowing and so forth.

Positive / Negative

Discrimination in Irish law is treating someone less favorably than another person in a comparable situation, based on one or more of the protected grounds:

Age
Disability
Civil Status
Family Status
Gender
Membership of the Traveller Community
Race
Religion
Sexual Orientation
(HAP)

Discrimination can be:

- Direct
- Indirect
- Association
- Imputation

What we do to try and level the playing field to identify and remove obstacles in the way of people accessing education or employment, going further and trying to create a space where people feel part of the community, valued members of the collective, to try and improve opportunities and outcomes for marginalised groups.

No good having rights if you cannot access them.

Reporting Obligations



All public bodies in Ireland have responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans. This is a legal obligation, called the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, and it originated in Section 42 of the [Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014](#).

It contains two distinct but interrelated specific statutory obligations (duties) – *Section 42 (1)* and *Section 42 (2)*.

Section 42 (1)

Requires public bodies to integrate human rights and equality issues into **every aspect** of how public bodies **performs their functions** on an ongoing basis.

Section 42 (2)

Requires public bodies to assess relevant human rights and equality issues, set out policies, plans and actions to address in its **strategic/corporate plan**. Then to report on developments in relation to addressing equality and human rights issues identified in its **Annual report**.

Positive Actions

Positive Action – not Positive Discrimination

Examples:

Free Fees / SUSI

HEAR / DARE / Mature Student Entry

Gender Equality Action Plans (aka Athena Swan)

Race Equality Action Plans (from HEA Report on Gender Equality in Higher Education, Implementation Plan and Anti-Racism Principles (20/3/2023))

SOAR for Access – e.g. Travellers in Education, 1916 Fund

Id+ Project in UCC – Intellectual Disability Universities of Sanctuary

Staff – examples include reasonable accommodations (Disability Act and Employment Equality Acts), increasing offering/provision of ISL as standard, recognition of carers in the workplace, equality statements in recruitment materials, equality policies and dignity & respect policies and reporting procedures, SALI.

Statutory Leave:

Maternity / Adoptive / Paternity /

Parental / Parent's / Annual / Carer's /

Sick / Domestic Violence / Force

Majeure / Unpaid Leave for Medical Care

Local (e.g. to UCC):

Surrogacy Leave / Fertility Treatment Leave

Other examples:

Pregnant Student Policy

Gender Recognition Act (statutory) -

Gender Identity and Expression Policy (local)

Discussion:

Could EDI be as seriously threatened in Irish HEIs as it is in HEIs in the USA?

*(Definitely? Likely? Probably not? Definitely not?)
(Why?)*

Vote on Mentimeter:



or

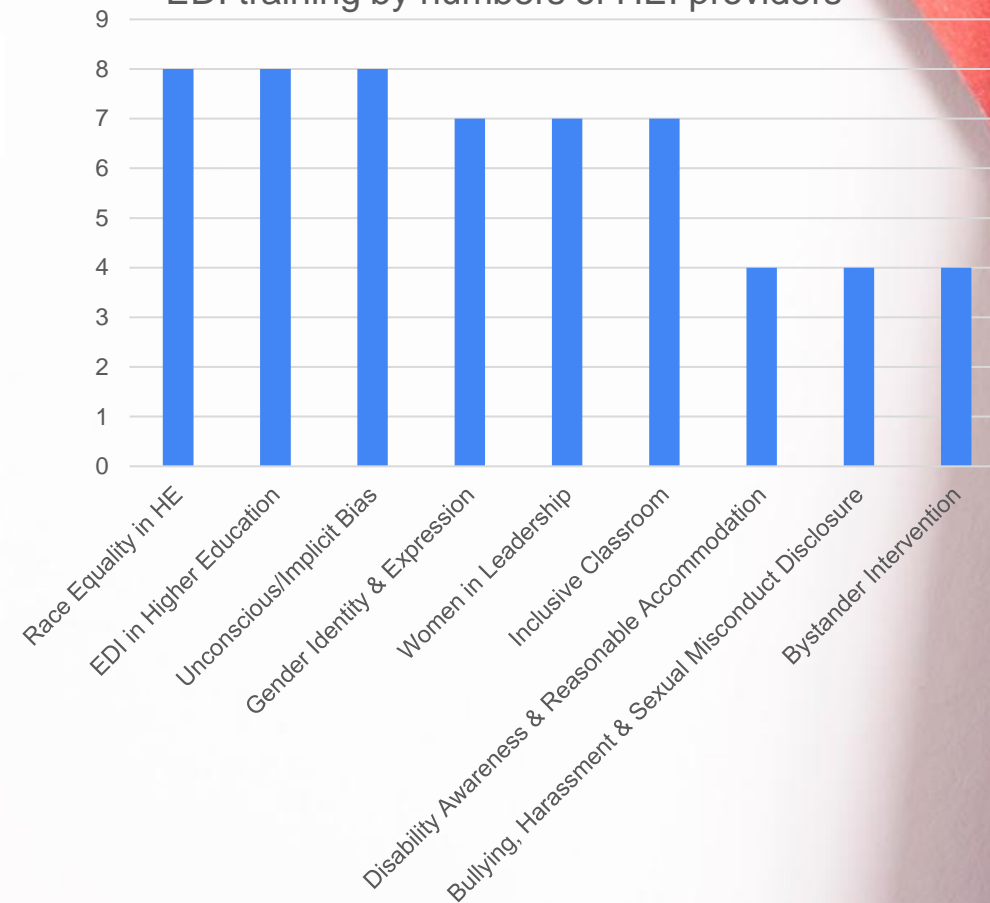
join at menti.com

use code **7570 8967**

EDI training in HEIs



EDI training by numbers of HEI providers



EDI training in HEIs

Problems and Opportunities

- **PROBLEM:** EDI training is “bitty”
HEIs differ in access to / variety of training courses
- **OPPORTUNITY:** SAI facilitate an “EDI passport”
to standardize training in line with national frameworks / for staff to take from role to role
- **PROBLEM:** Siloed data indicating uptake of EDI training
Complicates national reporting / the idea of “EDI in Ireland”
- **OPPORTUNITY:** Greater collaboration between HEIs

Thank you!



Join the SIG

More HEI collaboration

More data
More partners

More members

More HEI representation
More research and ideas

More Belonging

More equity
More diversity
More inclusion

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