

Technological Higher Education Association (THEA)



Gender and Diversity Statement

August 2018

Mission: The technological higher education sector will act positively to ensure equal opportunities for all persons, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, to access higher education and advance their careers.

Introduction

The technological higher education sector is strongly committed to providing equality of access for all persons to higher education and training and supporting the advancement of their careers. The sector recognises the importance of a diverse student body and staff cohort to its mission to deliver high-quality education, research, and innovation in support of society and the economy. Acknowledging the need for diversity within the student and staff communities, the sector also acknowledges that a male/female imbalance exists currently within the higher education sector in senior roles and also within certain academic disciplines. The sector recognises that these problems are not easily overcome and they require targeted interventions.

The mission above is rooted in the recognition that sustainable societies and economies need appropriate participation of all persons in order to develop and thrive. This is encapsulated in the [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), [in particular Goals 4, 5 and 10] which recognise equality as [“not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world”](#). Importantly, the SDGs categorically state that women must have equal opportunity for full and effective participation in leadership roles across the public, private, and political spheres. In our context, they emphasise equal access for all to quality tertiary education; they support actions to eliminate gender disparities in education, and they recommend the building and upgrading of gender-sensitive education facilities.

Aims

In advancing equality of opportunity, the technological higher education sector undertakes to deliver on the following commitments:

1. To work towards eliminating disparities in education by supporting a culture of inclusion where all have equal access to education;
2. To address the imbalance amongst staff and the student body in disciplinary areas which are traditionally male- or female-dominated;
3. To establish structures which allow equal opportunity for all to advance in their career;
4. To support all staff who have caring responsibilities and ensure that these responsibilities do not negatively affect their career progression;
5. To recognise that there is a specific issue regarding women progressing to senior roles and to work to remove any actual or perceived barriers;
6. To promote gender balance in the statutory decision-making committees, Governing Body and Academic Council, with no less than 40% membership of either gender.

The overarching mission set out in this document and the commitments above will be supported by appropriate action plans and work programmes.