Mary Immaculate College (MIC)

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII) Short Term Strategy

2022-2023

Introduction

Since 2018, MIC has been committed to the development of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII) and it is embedded in the MIC Strategic Plan, 'A Flourishing Learning Community 2020-2023' (2019). A unique aspect of this work at MIC is the inclusion of Interculturalism as a key objective to create a culture of welcome for diverse communities and ensuring that MIC promotes the integration and inclusion for all.

There have been several notable achievements for MIC since 2018, including the development of gender equality in terms of balance on governance and management committees, with a minimum of 40% female representation. The MIC Executive Team was restructured, and female representation has increased from 13% to 50%. Training in various areas related to EDII have included staff and students across the College. In addition, gender-neutral toilet facilities have been allocated on the Limerick and Thurles campuses. In September 2019, MIC received the bronze level 'Investors in Diversity' award from the Irish Centre for Diversity, recognising the steps taken to embed EDII into wider organisational systems. In addition, MIC is committed to the Athena SWAN Charter and principles, and successfully attained the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2020 with the Faculty of Arts attaining the Bronze Departmental Award in September 2022. The MIC Strategic Plan aimed to establish a new, senior management-level post responsible for creation of, and leadership of, the College's equality and diversity strategy. This appointment was successfully filled in January 2022. Since January 2022, the EDII Office has put in place the following Short Term Strategic Plan 2022-2023 and will begin a five-year plan to align with the MIC new institutional strategy (2023-2028). As detailed in the MIC Vision, the College is a unique university-level institution in Ireland and is dedicated to ensuring best practice and pioneering new ways to create an ethos and practice of equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism. MIC is committed to making 'a difference in the broader world, bearing in mind a received obligation to galvanise efforts to foster social justice and promote equality for the most marginalised' (2019, p33). The EDII work will strive to be innovative and creative that will seek to engage all member of the MIC community.

Mission of the EDII Office

The MIC EDII Office exists to embed an ethos and practice of equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism (EDII) at Mary Immaculate College that is underpinned by a whole institutional approach with the staff and student community, along with external local and national partners. The mission and strategy of the EDII Office is aligned and guided by the MIC Strategic Plan.

Values

The EDII Office is committed to developing open and transparent processes and practices, is equal in its treatment of all people, and seeks to create a culture of respect, inclusion, honesty, and consent. It works as equal partners with all people and agencies and strives to embed values that ensure a landscape that is safe for all, equal, diverse, inclusive of all and to develop strong intercultural relationships.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The EDII Office is also guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals designed to give society a better collective future towards 2030. In particular, the EDII Office is committed to Goal 4 Quality Education; Goal 5 Gender Equality; Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth; Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities; Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Goal 17 Partnership for the Goals that underpins our embedded approach.

High level Objectives

The EDII Office is guided by six high level objectives and each of these is underpinned by awareness raising, partnership processes and practices to create a culture of change across the College.

1. **EDII Infrastructure**

To create and support the development of EDII committees, working groups, champions, budgets, policies and practices to embed EDII at MIC.

2. **Gender Equality and Athena Swan Charter**

To continue to work on national priorities and processes including departmental and institutional Athena Swan exercises that promote gender equality, engage with colleagues locally and nationally on collaborative projects and develop a series of systems to support gender equality and mitigate against gender-based violence.

3. **LGBT+ Supports and Engagement**

To develop as a partnership approach new opportunities and policies that include, support and advocate for those within the LGBT+ staff and student communities.

4. **Race Equality and College of Sanctuary**

With the MIC staff and student community develop a series of supports and processes to include new migrants and the Ukraine community within the College. To enable the designation of MIC as a recognised College of Sanctuary in Ireland and develop scholarships schemes for those who face financial barriers to access higher education. To ensure that MIC engages with the HEA Race Equality Report (2021) and the recently published Implementation Plan (2022) to reduce discrimination and racism.

5. **Irish Language**

To facilitate a process that will support Irish Language, its' place and provision within MIC, among the staff and student community.

6. **Communication and Reporting**

Develop a suite of events, training and new funded projects for staff and students. On an annual basis provide a review and report for MIC on EDII and its embedding within the College.
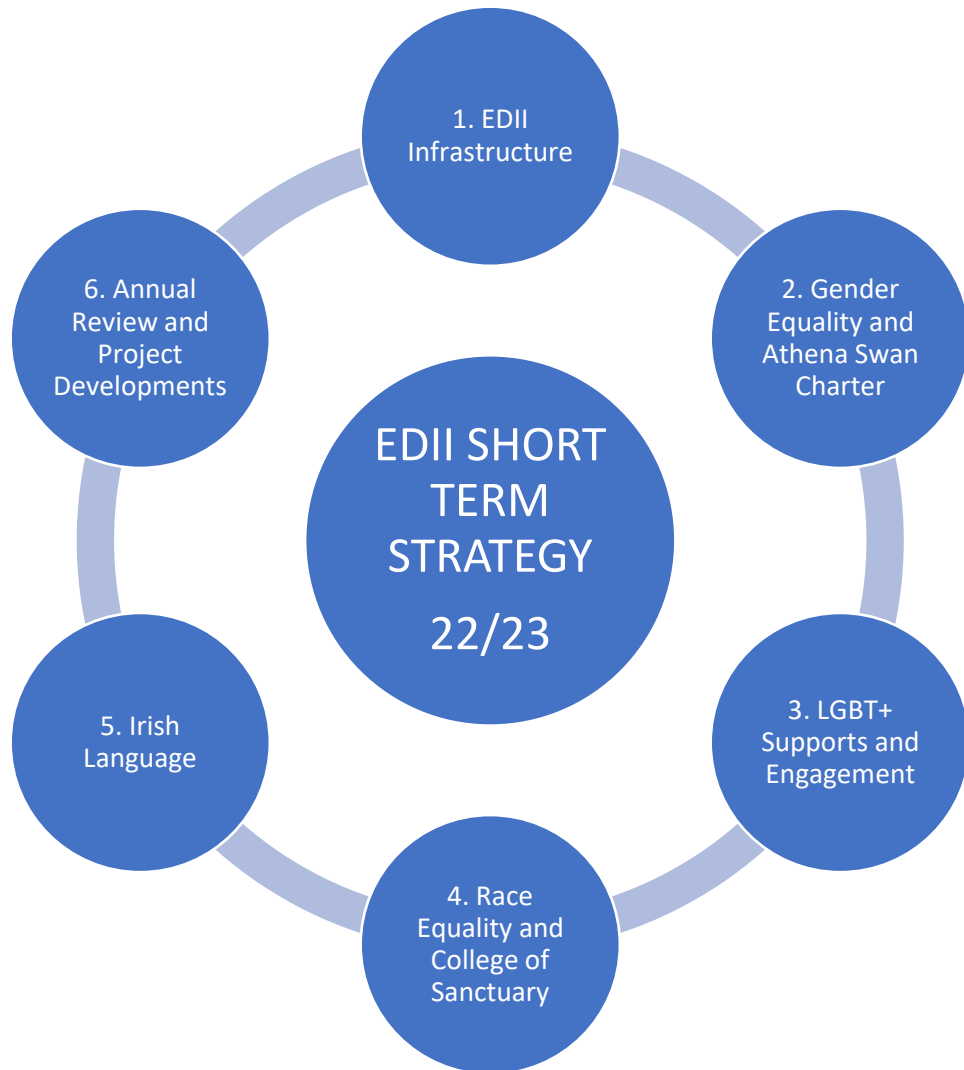
Figure 1. EDII Short Term Strategy 22/23

1. **High Level Objective 1 -** MIC Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII) Infrastructure.

The EDII Office will create and engage with a set of committees, working groups, champions network, policies and practices to support the embedding of EDII across MIC. These include:

- Quarterly reporting into the MIC Equality Committee.
- Monthly engagement with the MIC Executive Team.
- Restructuring of the Terms of Reference for the proposed Gender Equality Committee to broaden its scope to wider EDII issues and establish the EDII Implementation Committee.
- Quarterly reporting and engagement with the EDII Implementation Committee.
- Develop an action plan with the EDII Implementation Committee to develop the MIC Athena Swan Renewal process for the Bronze Award.
- Engage with the MIC EDII Champions, develop Terms of Reference and working plan.
- Create new and support established activities including the MIC LGBTQI+ Staff Network, the Ukraine Response Groups and College of Sanctuary Committee, Femfest, Community Sponsorship Project, and other EDII related working groups as they emerge.
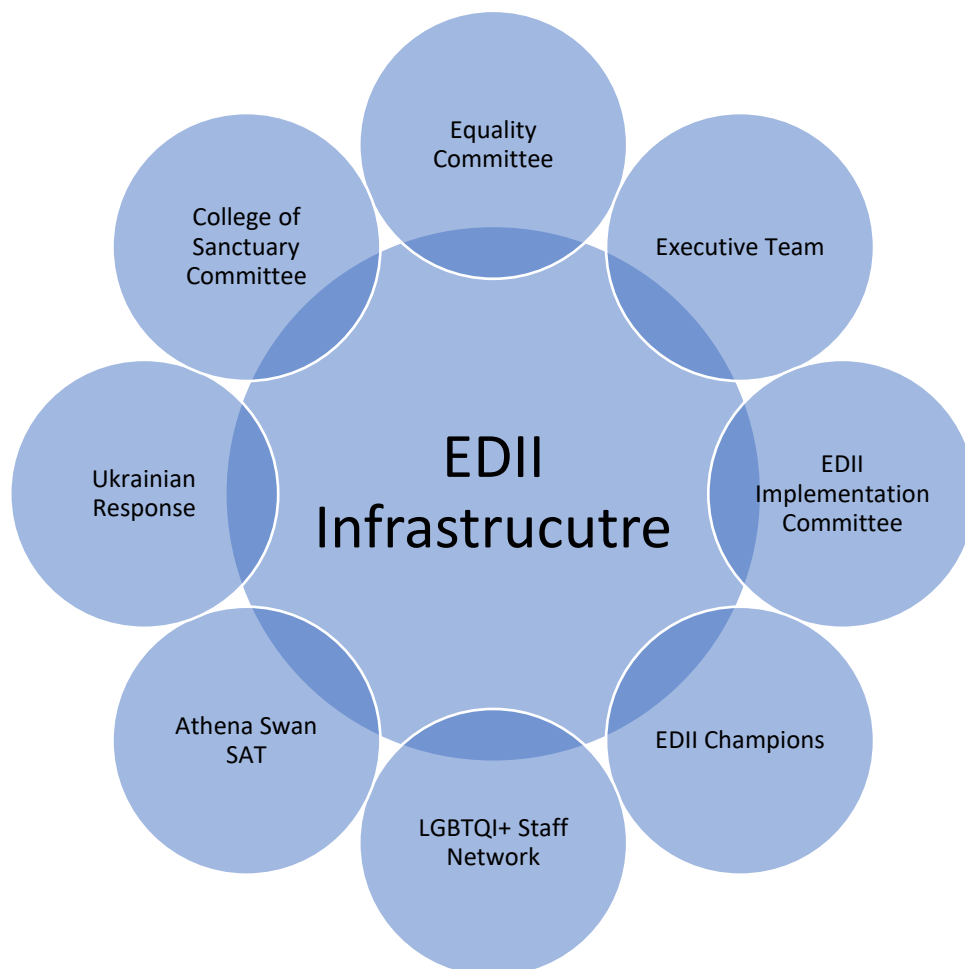
Figure 2. Office of EDI & Interculturalism Infrastructure

1.1 Executive Team

The Director of EDII is a member of the MIC Executive Team that oversees executive decisions of the College. MIC's Executive Team meets monthly and EDII is a standing item on the agenda where key decisions are made and progress updates reviewed.

1.2 Equality Committee

The EDII Office reports quarterly to the Equality Committee, a sub-committee of An tÚdarás Rialaithe (Governing Authority). The aim of the Equality Committee is to create a workplace and learning environment of the highest quality, characterised by equality of access and opportunity, diversity, and best practice in adherence to statutory provision for equality. Membership of the Equality Committee includes the MIC President, MIC Vice President for Administration and Finance, Director of HR, Director of Student Life, President of MIC Students' Union, Representative of Professional Services and Academic Staff, EDII Manager and EDII Director and is Chaired by a member An tÚdarás Rialaithe.

1.3 EDII Implementation Committee

In June 2022, Executive Team and the Equality Committee approved a restructuring of the Gender Equality Committee Terms of Reference to create the EDII Implementation Committee. The EDII Implementation Committee is a subcommittee of the Equality Committee and aims to oversee the strategic development and mainstreaming of EDII at MIC. Membership of this Committee includes the MIC Vice President Governance and Strategy, Director HR, Dean of Arts, Dean of Education, MIC Students' Union President, five EDII Champions, EDII Manager and Chaired by the EDII Director. The EDII Implementation Committee will meet in August 2022, and a quarterly annual meeting cycle will be established to create an action orientated approach towards the embedding of EDII across MIC.

1.4 EDII Champions

The EDII Champions were established at MIC to elevate, communicate, and embed EDII across the College. The five appointed Champions represent Academics and Professional Services and are appointed on the three-year basis. The EDII Champions are convened by the EDII Office and meet on a quarterly basis. The EDII Champions are appointed voluntarily on an expression of interest basis and represent the following areas: Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, Thurles campus and two representatives for the professional services. The aim of the Champion roles is to promote EDII within the broad cognate areas, support colleagues in the implementation of relevant programmes and activities and act as a point of contact on these issues with the EDII Office. The EDII Champions are members of the EDII Implementation Committee (Sub-Committee of the Equality Committee), and form a community of practice approach to the embedding of EDII at MIC.

1.5 Budget

The EDII budget was established in June 2022, aligns with the high-level objectives outlined in the EDII Short Term Strategy 2022-2023 and this budget will be reviewed annually. In addition, a College of Sanctuary budget had been established to support potential students from international protection seek financial support to access undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at MIC.

1.6 EDII Project Awards

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The aim of the EDII Project Awards will be to catalyse and embed EDII across MIC through new collaborative activities. These Awards encourage collaboration and partnerships between professional service and academic staff along with students and community organisations. Successful projects will be required to develop a short video and 300-word case study on the project by way of a project legacy. These case studies will be hosted on the EDII website. EDII themes that can be explored include projects that relate to:

- the Athena Swan Institution and Faculty of Arts Action Plans and
- the nine specified grounds of discrimination in Ireland that include: Gender, Civil status, Family, Sexual orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race, and the Traveller community.

Projects and Activities can encompass: Research Projects, Community Engaged Projects, Curriculum Design Activities, and Events that promote EDII. Invitation to apply for these awards will be circulated annually in September and will be reviewed by the EDII Office with the EDII Champions.

1.7 External Engagement and Partnerships

The national landscape underpinning gender equality and wider EDI activities is increasingly active and rapidly changing. Many of these committees were originally established to focus on gender and gender equality but developed recently to reflect a wider brief that includes race and diversity. Several national committees are in existence and various members of the MIC community are members including the EDII Manager and EDII Director. These MIC representatives will continue to engage and collaborate with colleagues nationally, and avail of new national opportunities to work on other EDII related areas.

Committee	MIC Rep	Details
National Vice-Presidents and Directors for EDI Committee	Prof Lorraine McIlrath	
HEA National Committee for EDI Subgroup: • The second HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIs	Prof Lorraine McIlrath	Previously the HEA National Committee for Gender Equality.
Athena Swan Practitioner Network Subgroups: • Race and ethnicity working group • Transgender resources	Edel Foster Prof. Lorraine McIlrath & Edel Foster Edel Foster	Subgroups working on race and ethnicity; and transgender resources.
National Student Response Steering Committee NSR English Language Support Sub-Committee	Prof Lorraine McIlrath Prof Lorraine McIlrath & Dr Eugene O'Brien	Set up in response to supporting Ukrainian students seeking to undertake third level programmes

National Steering Response Helpdesk	Prof Lorraine McIlrath, Prof Gary O'Brien, Edel Foster	
University of Sanctuary Ireland Committee	Prof Lorraine McIlrath (Chair)	
National Advisory Committee; National Women's Council	Prof Lorraine McIlrath, Edel Foster & Dr Geraldine Brosnan	

Table 1. National Committees and MIC Representation

In addition, at a local level the EDII Office will develop a range of partnerships related to different themes within EDII such as LGBT+ inter-agency supports, sexual violence with local service partners and agencies, amongst others. These local collectives will involve an ongoing process of relationship development led by the EDII Office.

1.8 EDII Website and College of Sanctuary Hub

The EDII website and Sanctuary Hub have both been developed by Strategic Communications and Marketing in partnership with the EDII Office and a process of content population is underway. The Sanctuary Hub was launched in the Spring of 2022 with a view toward supporting the Ukraine community and other new communities in Ireland to assess information and resources. The Sanctuary Hub will become the mainframe to articulate a range of supports on offer at MIC for those looking to access academic programmes at MIC from the international protection community. The EDII Website will be launched in the end of September 2022, and it is housed prominently on the MIC landing page under 'Life at MIC'. Quarterly EDII Office updates will be circulated to MIC staff and students on activities, projects, and opportunities. These updates will guide people to the EDII website.

- EDII Website: https://www.mic.ul.ie/edii
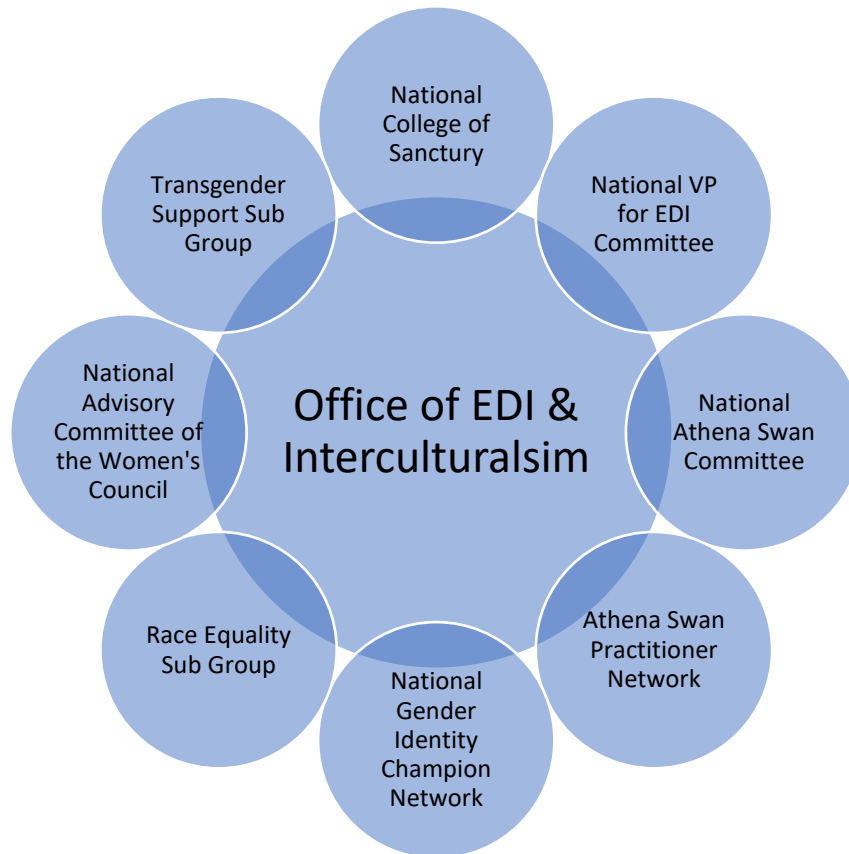- Sanctuary Hub: https://www.mic.ul.ie/sanctuary

Figure 3. Office of EDI & Interculturalism External Engagement

2. High Level Objective 2 - Gender Equality and Athena Swan Charter

To continue to work on national priorities and processes that underpin gender equality, engage with colleagues nationally and develop a series of systems to support gender-based violence among the student body. Practitioner

2.1 Athena Swan Frameworks
The Athena Swan Charter launched in the Republic of Ireland in early 2015. The extension of the Charter to Ireland was made possible through funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Engagement with the Charter is a key pillar of Ireland's National Strategy for Gender Equality with progress linked to institutional compact and key performance indicators for funding. Key objectives of the new and revised 2021 Athena Swan Ireland Charter Framework is to support higher education institutions, academic departments, and professional units be impactful and sustain gender equality work and to build capacity for evidence-based equality work across the equality grounds enshrined in Irish legislation.

Institution Level - MIC achieved the Athena Swan Institution Bronze Award in 2019 and work is ongoing to implement and embed the four-year action plan. The renewal of this Award is due for submission in November 2023 that aligns with the new Athena Swan Framework process. The new

framework seeks to acknowledge and account for wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work being undertaken by higher education institutions. On successful retention of the Bronze award, MIC will be required to work towards Silver accreditation in 2027. The EDII Office will develop a process with the EDII Implementation Committee to undertake the self-assessment process commencing with a review of the Institutional Action Plan in mid-2022 followed by the formation of the assessment plan and report writing. Key priority areas for MIC are outlined in Table 1.

Faculty Level - The Faculty of Arts submitted its first Bronze level award in June 2022 and was successfully awarded on the 1st of September 2022 with a strong commendation. The EDII Office will support the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and his team oversee implementation of the Action Plan and work towards a renewal/silver in 2025. Key priority areas for the Faculty of Arts are outlined in Table 2.

In addition, the EDII Office will work with the Dean of the Faculty of Education to plan and work towards submission of Bronze Award in 2024.

Priority Athena Swan Actions
Institution Level (2019 – 2023)
• **Progress the appointment of academic merit-based promotional posts** • **Develop and implement a flexible working policy** • **Introduce a workload model** • **Appoint a Head of EDI** • **Deliver EDI, unconscious bias, and interview training for those involved in recruitment and selection panels**
Faculty Level – Faculty of Arts (2022 – 2025)
• **Ensuring continuity/stability of employment for all FoA staff** • **Supporting and empowering women for career progression** • **Improving the diversity of the student cohort** • **Enhancing communication between management and staff** • **Delivering a suite of equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism (EDII) training, including unconscious bias and interview training for those involved in recruitment and selection panels**

Table 2. MIC Institutional and Faculty of Arts Athena Swan Priorities

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│   Institution Bronze Award:     │
│            2019-2023            │
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│        Faculty of Arts:         │
│       Submitted 2022            │
│         Renewal 2025            │
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│   Instituion Bronze Renewal:    │
│      Due November 2023          │
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│     Faculty of Education:       │
│          Due 2024               │
│        Renewal 2028             │
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│   Faculty of Arts Renewal /     │
│            Silver               │
│          Due 2025               │
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│      Institution Silver         │
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│     Faculty of Education        │
│       Renewal / Silver          │
│          Due 2028               │
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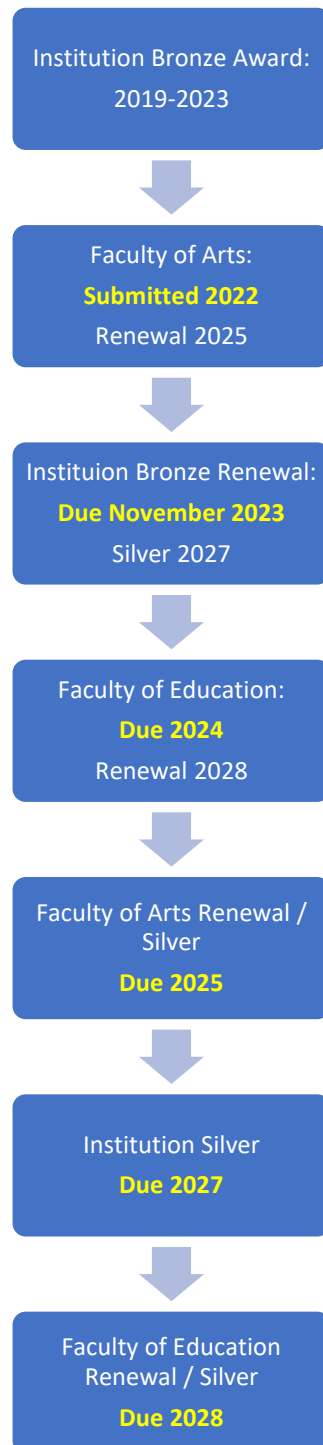
Figure 5. Athena Swan submission timeline in MIC

*Note – Athena Swan is being rolled out in the Professional Services from 2022 onwards.

2.2 Aurora

The EDII Office will continue to promote and support MIC female staff participate in the Aurora Advance HE's leadership development initiative for women. Aurora brings together leadership experts and staff from higher education institutions to take positive action to address the under-

representation of women in leadership positions in the sector. Since its launch in 2013 more than 7,000 women from nearly 200 different institutions across the UK and Ireland have participated. Aurora is for women, up to senior lecturer level or the professional services equivalent, working in a university, college or related organisation who would like to develop and explore issues relating to leadership roles and responsibilities.   Six MIC staff have participated in the programme to date.   The EDII Office has budgeted for eight participants for 2022-2023 that is an increase from three funded places annually in previous years. An information session with MIC Aurora Alumni took place on the 30th of August at 11am in G10 on the MIC Limerick campus to share knowledge and generate interest with 20 women attending. The closing date for expressions of interest is the 16th of September 2022. Potential participants should have the endorsement of their line manager, be committed to developing and enhancing their career and be available to attend each of the sessions above. In addition, participants work with a mentor during and after the programme that they self-select.

2.3 Gender Equality Enhancement Fund Collaborations (GEEF)
The EDII Office will engage with other higher education institutions nationally to avail of funding made available through the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund (GEEF) for new collaborative projects. By way of background to GEEF, higher education legislation requires institutions to promote gender-balance among students and staff, and for the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to promote the attainment of equality of opportunity. The HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions (2016) was an important first step in highlighting the gender inequality that existed at senior academic levels in our HEIs. The HEA Expert Group report outlined several recommendations for the HEIs, HEA, research funding agencies and other key stakeholders. In 2017, the Minister of State for Higher Education established the Gender Equality Taskforce to identify significant measures that could accelerate progress in achieving gender equality in the Irish HEIs. Their Action Plan encompasses a suite of initiatives to bring about sustainable organisational change and to empower a culture of gender equality in the HEIs for all staff, academic and professional, as well as management and support staff at all levels. One recommendation included: A new 'Gender Equality Enhancement Funding Call' should be set up to support innovative organisational and cultural change initiatives nationally. This fund aims to: to encourage innovative approaches to addressing gender inequality across HEIs; to facilitate gender equality initiatives that respond to the recommendations of the HEA Expert Group and/or Gender Equality Taskforce's recommended actions; to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration to achieve national transformation.
To date, MIC has been involved with the following projects:
- Embedding Gender Identity, Expression & Diversity Training and Best Practice into Irish HEI – MIC representative, Edel Foster
- Integrating the gender dimension into teaching, learning and educational outreach in initial teacher education – led by Dr Maeve Liston

In 2022, MIC led on a GEEF project proposal with the University of Limerick, University of Galway, and Trinity College Dublin to develop an edited book entitled 'Transforming Gender Equality and Inclusion within Higher Education in Ireland – Contemporary Perspectives' and as a collaborator on a MTU led project entitled 'Engaging men in building gender equality – the development of a pilot

programme in Irish HEIs'. Outcomes related to the success, or otherwise, of these projects will be announced in Semester 1 2022-2023.

2.4 Advance HE

MIC is a member of Advance HE meaning that staff have access to a range of resources, supports, funding opportunities and fellowship pathways. The EDII Office will promote Advance HE, its activities, and resources among the MIC community. Advance HE is a member-led, sector-owned charity that works with institutions and higher education across the world to improve higher education for staff, students, and society. The group are experts in higher education with a particular focus on enhancing teaching and learning, effective governance, leadership development and tackling inequalities through our equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work. Advance HE delivers support through professional development programmes and events, Fellowships, awards, student surveys, providing strategic change and consultancy services and through membership (including accreditation of teaching and learning, equality charters, research, knowledge, and resources).

2.6 Bystander Intervention

The HEA has provided funding to allow free access for up to 100 participants from 20 HEIs to the 4-module online UCC Bystander Intervention programme. The aim of this funded initiative is to give institutions the opportunity to undertake the training with a pilot group and to better understand and assess the impact it may have on the campus culture. The existing programme is primarily targeted at students, but to meet the growing demand from staff the programme has been adapted to create a stand-alone Bystander Intervention programme for staff. MIC is one of the pilot HEIs in 2022-2023 following a series of meeting with the MISU, MIC EDII Office and Prof. Louise Crowley, UCC Active Bystander Programme. 70 places will be offered to student and 30 to MIC staff.

2.7 Speak Out

The Speak Out Programme and Reporting Tool is an online anonymous reporting system for staff and students within higher education in Ireland. There are now 20 participating higher education institutions (HEIs) in the programme with a representative from each participating in a national Steering Committee. The tool was led by Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education Ireland (PCHEI) and funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The tool takes an intersectional approach to its' response to the Framework for Consent 2019 and is accessible to staff, students, and visitors to HEIs. As an anonymous reporting tool, people can voluntarily disclose incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour/ control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. The information that is provided by an individual (staff or student) through the Speak out tool is valuable data collated as it helps inform activities and strategies aimed at addressing bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct and develop a national understanding. Data is aggregated at a national level and no data is shared across or between institutions, therefore each participating HEI only has access to its' own data. Each of the 20 participating institutions are recommended to designate 3 site administrators from areas including Student Counselling Service (SCS), Human Resources (HR), and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). These administrators receive email notifications when a report/disclosure has been made on the site. MIC Executive Team have approved membership and engagement with the Programme and the systems will be embedded in the EDII website in 2022-2023.

3. **High Level Objective 3** - LGBT+ Supports and Engagement

To develop supports and policies that include and protect those within the LGBT+ community.

3.1 LGBTQI+ Staff Network

The EDII Office supports and facilitates the recently formed MIC LGBTQI+ Staff Network. The group aims to be a community for LGBTQI+ staff members, to engage allies and support those considering their own identity. The group organises social events, awareness raising events and provides a safe space for LGBTQI+ staff members to discuss issues with the support of the EDII Office. The objectives of this recently formed network include the following:

- Increase the visibility of LGBTQI+ staff on campus.
- Ensure support and visibility are happening in parallel to each other.
- Encourage research, teaching, and cultural activities related to LGBTQI+ issues.
- Provide social and professional networking opportunities for MIC LGBTQI+ staff.
- Identify training opportunities for MIC staff on LGBTQI+ issues.
- Provide informal peer support for LGBTQI+ staff.
- Seek to ensure that students are supported throughout their time in MIC.

Membership of the Network is open to all MIC Staff members who support the aims and objectives of the network. The Network may organise some events and activities for LGBTQI+ MIC Staff members only. However, all MIC staff members are invited to become allies and attend open events. Members are asked to and are expected to exercise a high degree of discretion regarding personal and private information shared during network meetings and activities. MIC policies regarding respect for and dignity of colleagues (present or not) apply to all members and meetings/events.

3.2 LGBT+ MISU

The EDII Office will work with the incoming EDI MISU Officer and MISU President to develop plans and process to develop deeper awareness, understanding and supports a culture of respect among the student population in terms of expressing identity.

3.3 Gender Expression and Identity Policy

In 2022-2023 the MIC Gender Expression and Identity Policy for Staff and Students will be reviewed and finalised by various stakeholders including legal experts and LGBT+ national and local advocacy organisations, staff, and study of MIC. It will then be submitted for approval to Executive Teams and the Equality Committee. The purpose of this policy is to enshrine MIC's commitment to equality and support for the expression of gender and identity, and to ensure that MIC does not discriminate in any way on the basis of sex, gender identity, or gender expression. It provides information and guidance to staff, managers, students, and alumni to ensure that all within the MIC community feel supported and that transphobia is prevented, while ensuring MIC remains compliant with legislation. The Policy will set forth guidelines to address the needs of transgender and gender diverse employees, students and alumni, and the implementation of the law in situations where questions may arise as to how to protect the legal rights or safety of such for all people.

3.4 Projects and Activities

The EDII Office will work in partnership with staff and student to engage in new projects and activities to support the LGBTQI communities. It will seek to develop a more formal Ally Programme, research how a Pride Pedestrian Walkway on campus might be developed, continue to engage, and elevate MIC Pride and Limerick Pride Week, will engage in the MIC Pride Flag Raising, developed Interagency collaboration with agencies and advocacy organisations. It will continue to engage with the GEEF project that led to the Gender Identity & Expression Champion Network. As part of this project, Embedding Gender Identity, Expression & Diversity Training and Best Practice into Irish HEIs, a national network has been developed championing gender identity and expression equality across Irish HEIs.

3.5 Training and Awareness

A suite of training activities for staff and students will continue with the support of the EDII Office and MISU and the EDII Office will look for further training opportunities to embed an inclusive and supportive ethos and culture. As part of the GEEF project, Embedding Gender Identity, Expression & Diversity Training and Best Practice into Irish HEIs, MIC has been rolling out bespoke gender diversity training with ShoutOut since 2021 for staff. The training is aimed at all staff but also specific sessions for HR staff and senior leaders. In addition, TENI will deliver Trans 101 for students in the academic year 2022-2023 to develop understandings in the student community on issues related to gender expression and identity. With our local advocacy agency, GOOSH we will work toward an annual STD Health check Clinic on campus in partnership with MISU.

4. **High Level Objective 4** – Race Equality and College of Sanctuary

The EDII Office will continues to engage and develop a series of supports and processes to include address race equality as a national and local priority, and the inclusion of new migrants and the Ukraine community within the College. Underpinning activities will involve partnerships with staff, students, as well as key flagships centres and units within MIC including TEAL and EDNIP alongside external agencies.

4.1 College of Sanctuary Designation

In early 2022, the MIC College of Sanctuary Committee was formed with five sub-committees taking responsibility for various aspects of the work. In 2022-2023, the EDII Office with the MIC College of Sanctuary Committee will develop a proposal to be considered by the University of Sanctuary Steering Committee to be designated as a College of Sanctuary. A range of sustainable and ongoing strategies, values, practices, and responses are key to the designation. These will include the development of scholarships, English Language classes, a seminar series targeting teachers in primary schools to support multiculturalism and inclusion in the classroom, the MIC Community Sponsorship Programme and engagement with our stakeholders.

4.2 College of Sanctuary Scholarships

As part of the designation towards College of Sanctuary at Mary Immaculate College (MIC), the College of Sanctuary Scholarship Programme is proposed for the academic year 2023-2024. The MIC

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Sanctuary Scholarship Programme is designed to increase participation for International Protection Applicants, refugees, vulnerable immigrant groups, and, if necessary, the Ukraine community. The proposed MIC College of Sanctuary Scholarship Programme will support an annual maximum intake of 4 undergraduate and 2 postgraduates' students. Applicants from one of the below groups residing in the Republic of Ireland are eligible to apply and proof of ethnic/legal status will be required upon application:

- Persons who are or who have been in the International Protection process, and who have permission to reside in the State and to study;
- Immigrants in an irregular situation who are engaging with the Minister of Justice to regularise their status (including undocumented).

4.3 NSR Helpdesk

The EDII Office will continue to represent MIC on the various committees that oversee and engage with the National Student and Researcher Helpdesk. Ireland has responded to the needs of displaced Ukrainian citizens in accordance with the Temporary Protection Measure under the EU Commission's Directive (2001/55/EC). This Directive was transposed by Section 60 of the International Protection Act 2015. The technical/legal status of these people is "beneficiaries of temporary protection under the EU Directive". This requires, inter alia, that qualified persons under this Act will be able to access education on the same basis as Irish citizens. Those granted temporary protection are not required to apply for international protection (asylum / refugee status). In 2022, the Department of Justice lifted Visa requirements to allow Ukrainian people who want to seek safety here do so as quickly and easily as possible. DFHERIS has been working with the IUA and THEA on this matter, and a central Helpdesk was established in Maynooth University to manage this process. In effect, it is proposed that a 'triage' process will be staffed by Admissions/ Research Advisors and other key academic staff, who will be assist Ukrainian students in identifying options. The likely source of enquiries will be Ukrainian student with the equivalent of the LC seeking to access HE, or those who were already on a programme of study looking to continue with their studies. Displaced researchers will also be managed through this process. It is also possible that applicants may be guided to the Adult Education Guidance Service operated by the ETBs for the purposes of pursuing further education or to increase competency tin English Language. The resources for the desk are being funded by DFHERIS. The Central Desk will be publicised on the Government website – www.gov.ie – as the single point of enquiry for those seeking to access higher education studies.

4.4 English Language Migrant Programme

As part of the MIC response to the Ukraine community and other displaced people, a 10-week MIC Pre-sessional English Language Programme was provided for new communities looking to transition to study within higher education in Ireland and who may need to improve their English for academic purposes. The Programme was a collaboration between the MIC Office for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII), the MIC Department of English Language and Literature in partnership with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) and funded by MIC. The course was led and taught by MIC Lecturer, Ilona Costelloe, who has extensive experience and expertise in supporting new English language learners. Other activities to work with our new communities and help improve levels of English Language will be undertaken in 2022-2013.

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4.5 MIC Teaching for Inclusion Seminar Series

The MIC Teaching for Inclusion Seminar Series will be launched in September 2022 and will run until December 2022. The Seminar Series aims to support and share knowledge with the wider teaching community to develop an ethos and practice of diversity, inclusion and integration in the classroom and schools. The aim of the series is for the primary school teaching community to engage with us to support their work within diverse and multicultural environments. This Seminar Series will be hosted online and available for all teachers across the country to access wherever they may be located. While the war in Ukraine has catalysed this seminar series, we are also conscious of the growing needs of the teaching community over the last two decades in terms of welcoming diverse communities seeking asylum and refuge. This is our College's response to the educational needs of our new communities and to share our knowledge more broadly. The Seminar Series is targeting teachers in Primary Schools and our hope is that this will spark new ways to create a culture of inclusion in the school and classroom and will offer a range of tools to embed a culture of sanctuary. The Seminar Series will explore an array of themes including the place and practice of music, integration, language and literacy practices, universal design for learning, fairy tales and storytelling, exploring migrant and migration rights in Ireland. The series will be delivered by MIC lecturers with academic and practice experience in these thematic areas and include Dr. Ailbhe Kenny, Dr. Ruth Bourke, Dr Fíodhna Gardiner-Hyland, Dr. Sabine Egger, Jean Reale, and Dr Brighid Golden.

4.6 MIC Community Sponsorship Programme

In early 2022, a group of staff at MIC developed the MIC Community Sponsorship Programme. The core group is supported by diverse group of 32 staff members with different skill sets that have signed up and are regularly participating in this Community Sponsorship Group. The Community Sponsorship Group partner with a Regional Support Organisation (RSO) namely Doras, who are working with the Group to help prepare and complete application forms, deliver training and guidance through the process. More information here: https://doras.org/community-sponsorship/. Community sponsorship is a new way to welcome refugees to Ireland; it is a unique collaboration between Government, UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency), NGOs and civil society. Unlike Ireland's existing refugee resettlement programme, where the State provides integration services directly, Community sponsorship empowers members of the public who wish to become the face of welcome in their local community and to assume responsibility for providing a range of integration supports to a refugee family. This model of resettlement was pioneered in Canada in 1979 and has seen hugely positive outcomes since then, transforming the lives of both refugees and volunteers. Sponsors are asked to commit to providing financial and non-financial supports to a resettled family for eighteen months; and to source suitable housing for two to three years. Sponsorship groups also play a key role in introducing resettled families to State services, local amenities, educational and language resources, and social and professional networks in the new community in which they have settled. The EDII Office will continue to engage with and support the work of the MIC Community Sponsorship Programme as part of the MIC College of Sanctuary designation.

4.7 Race Equality

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The EDII Office aims to work on the implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, deriving from section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act (2014). Under this Act, all public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must undertake assessment and monitoring, and have policies and plans to promote equality, prevent discrimination, and protect the human rights of staff, students, and the wider public that are served by the work of HEIs. The Race Equality Report (2021) and the recently published Implementation Plan (2022) will be central to the work of the EDII Office at MIC in terms of addressing key theme addressed to reduce and prevent racism. Racism as defined by the Implementation Plan (2022) relates to "the power dynamics present in those structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on their identity," (2022, p3). Key aspects that the EDII Office will address, as per national guidelines, includes; Leadership; Supporting diversity in staffing; Making race/equality policies transparent; Reporting mechanisms; Awareness and training; Fostering diversity in HEIs; Supporting diversity in student recruitment; and Data Collection.

5. **High Level Objective 5** - Irish Language Review

The MIC Strategic Plan 'A flourishing Learning Community 2020-2023' (2020) aimed to establish a new, senior management-level post responsible for creation of, and leadership of, the College's equality and diversity strategy. This appointment was successfully filled, and Professor Lorraine McIlrath took up the role in mid-January 2022 as the inaugural Director of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII).   A pending review of our Bilingual Policy and Irish Language service delivery was deferred for some time until this appointment was made. In May 2022, the MIC Executive Team directed this work to the Director of EDII with approval to commence activity in the forthcoming academic year 2022-2023. The Director of EDII will facilitate this review with our stakeholders, develop a high-level working group and focus on the development of a new MIC strategic plan for the Irish language that seeks to further align with and enact the Official Languages Act, 2003.

6. **High Level Objective 6** – Communication, Reporting and Events

In addition to the normative reporting in the various EDII committees, the EDII Office will engage in informal communication through newsletters, annual reports and develop a series of month events to elevate and sustain EDII at MIC.

6.1 Quarterly Newsletters
The EDII Office will produce a series of newsletters that will update MIC staff and student on opportunities, project, partnerships, projects, and activities to embed an ethos and practice of EDII at MIC.

6.2 Annual Report

At the end of each academic year the EDII Office will publish an annual report on all activities, programmes, events, impacts and achievement. These reports will be made available to all MIC staff and student on the EDII website.

6.3 EDII Events

The following calendar of event is proposed for 2022-2023 and aligns with the High-Level Objectives outlined in the EDII Short Term Strategic Plan.

September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022
Aurora Showcase & 2022-2023 Application EDII Project Awards Launch 7/09: 2nd/3rd/4th year students (MISU Event) 28/09: 1st year students (MISU Event)	1/10: International Day of the Elder (1st) with Community Engagement EDII Athena Swan Renewal Bronze Award Launch 17- 21st October: MIC Pride (MISU Event)	TBC: MIC Pride 19/11: International Men's Day 25/11: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 25/11-10/12: 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence	3/12: International Day of Persons with disability December 10/12: Human Rights Day EDII Strategy & Website Launch
January 2023	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023
12/01 Ashling Murphy Memorial 15/01: World Religion Day	20/02: World Day of Social Justice	8/03: International Women's Day 6-10/03: FemFest 21/03: International Day of Racial Discrimination 31/03: Transgender Day of Visibility	8/04: International Traveller and Roma Day
May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023
15/05: International Day of Families 17/05: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia 21/05: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 25/05: Africa Day	18/06: Tipperary Pride 20/06: World Refugee Day 22-26 June: Dublin Pride All month: Pride Awareness	04/07-10/07: Limerick Pride	

Table 1: Calendar of Events 2022-2022