



## **Athena SWAN at MIC**

**Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Athena SWAN e-zine. During these strange times, we have lots to share with you including some exciting dates for your diary, upcoming training opportunities and the celebration of Pride 2020 in MIC. We also take a look at the guidance note on COVID-19 and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, recently published by the Commission.**

**Finally, our HR Corner for this edition briefly summarises the College's Dignity and Respect at Work Policy.**

**If you want to read more information on the background to Athena SWAN you can see our previous e-zines at**

**this [link](#).**

**Further information is available on our webpage [here](#).**

**Read the Athena SWAN Action Plan [here](#).**

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## ***Athena SWAN Update in MIC***

### ***Raising Pride Flag for Limerick 2020***

July marked a momentous occasion for MIC when the Pride flag was raised for the first time to celebrate both Limerick and Tipperary Pride weeks. We proudly flew the flag in solidarity with our LGBTQ staff and students. We are committed to being allies, supporting the LGBTQ community and celebrating the diversity of all students and staff.



Edel Foster, MIC Athena SWAN Project Manager and Lisa Daly, Chairperson of Limerick Pride, raise the Pride Flag at MIC Limerick.



Tony Ó Floinn, MIC Lecturer raises the Pride Flag at MIC Thurles.

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## ***Call for Aurora Expressions of Interest***

In our previous Ezine we looked at a case study of the Aurora programme at UCC. [Aurora](#) is Advance HE's leadership development initiative for women. It is run as a unique partnership bringing together leadership experts and 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 in Aurora.

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. The 2020/21 programme will be delivered online and the dates for the year can be found [here](#).

MIC will support female staff to undertake the Aurora programme and to develop the leadership skills and networks of female staff ([Action 5.3.9, MIC Athena SWAN Action Plan](#)).

If you would like to participate, please complete the expression of interest form [here](#) by *Friday 18 September*. In the event that the course is oversubscribed, random selection of participants will take place. Participants should have the endorsement of their line manager and be committed to developing and enhancing their career.



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## ***Impact of COVID-19 on staff at MIC***

Following on from the surveys undertaken by the Quality Office recently, keep an eye on your emails for an invitation to complete a staff survey with an EDI focus. The survey aims to investigate the challenges and impact that COVID-19 is having on staff at MIC.

It is important to capture this data by gender and staff categories to highlight any differences. The data will highlight the impact the current situation is having on career

development of staff, research productivity and workloads.

The study will identify changes required to the institutional Athena SWAN action plan and areas that may need to be re-prioritised. The data will indicate if certain Athena SWAN actions need revised timelines and will serve as a baseline for seeking this information from staff again in 6/12 months' time in order to monitor any changes that may arise.



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## ***Upcoming Events***

### ***EDI Coffee Morning***

You are invited to join our 1<sup>st</sup> virtual coffee morning on ***Wednesday 2 September at 11am.*** We will take this opportunity to introduce you to our Athena SWAN Champions, who have volunteered for the role ensuring cross-institutional representation.

We will also look at the importance of keeping EDI on the agenda at the moment across the College. If you wish to attend and/or submit any queries, please email [edel.foster@mic.ul.ie](mailto:edel.foster@mic.ul.ie).



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## ***Diversity in the Limerick Community***

As part of the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, we are delighted to be involved in an exciting event in collaboration with *Limerick Youth Service, GOSHH, Doras & UL sanctuary PhD fellow.*

MIC will host this event, bringing professional and youth voices from the wider community together to raise awareness of their work and of the challenges being faced at the moment.

A panel of exceptional speakers, representative of a multicultural Limerick, will discuss Limerick as a city, their place in it and the diversity of the city. Each panelist will reflect on the impact COVID-19 is having on diverse and minority groups in Limerick. Professor Gary O'Brien will MC the event, with the following panel members:

- Shay Moloney - Limerick Youth Service
- Ann Piercy, Personal Support, GOSHH
- Ahmed Hassan Mohammed - Doras
- Mamobo-Oghene Ogoro - UL sanctuary PhD fellow
- Patrick McElligott, LGBT Support Worker, GOSHH
- Tyrone Guillen – awaiting a third level college place

**Date: Wednesday 30 September**

**Time: 6pm**

**Registration: [Here](#)**

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## ***IDEC Diversity Awareness Training***

Brigid Golden has organised IDEC Ireland to deliver Diversity Awareness Training to staff at MIC. This two seminar workshop will support you to understand more about diversity in Irish classrooms and support you to work in intercultural settings. Roughly 12% of children in Irish classrooms were born outside of Ireland, with many more children from diverse cultural, religious and ethnic heritage born in Ireland making up our classrooms today.

**Dates: Thursday 27 and Friday 28 August**

To register, please contact Brigid on [brigid.golden@mic.ul.ie](mailto:brigid.golden@mic.ul.ie)

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## ***COVID-19 and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty***

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges for the protection of human rights, both in its threat to life and health of persons, and in actions taken by the State in its response and recovery plans. Times of crisis can exacerbate existing inequalities and render people more vulnerable. COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on certain groups in society, for example older people, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups and women.

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty places a legal obligation on all public bodies, in their daily work, to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services; and
- protect the human rights of staff and service users.

It is a permanent and ongoing obligation. It is a positive duty, requiring public bodies to be proactive and to consider human rights and equality issues when developing policies, plans and services.

As public bodies move towards recovery and longer term planning, this provides an important framework to systematically consider and reflect the particular needs of staff and service users at risk of inequality, discrimination or disproportionate impact, and helps to mitigate and avoid unintended consequences.

Here are key questions to consider in COVID-19 response and recovery plans, for staff and/or service users:



<b>Developing responses</b>	<b>Have you taken action to ensure that special measures or changes in service delivery introduced in response to COVID-19 are non-discriminatory?</b>
	Have you considered the specific needs of people protected under the equality legislation: gender, civil status, family status, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community; and people at risk of poverty and social exclusion?
	Are there are specific targeted measures you need to consider to ensure that all persons are covered and no-one is left behind? Have you identified specific steps to make reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities?
<b>Implementing responses</b>	Have you equality proofed any legislation, regulation or policies in terms of their impact across the grounds of the Equal Status Acts?
	Have you scrutinised any legislation, regulation or policies in terms of their impact on human rights and on civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights?
	Have you reflected on your legal obligations as employers under the Employment Equality Acts to ensure any decision or policy you make in response to COVID-19 does not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees on any of the nine grounds protected under that legislation?
<b>Consultation</b>	Have you consulted with civil society organisations representative of the equality grounds, and with staff and/or their representatives when a decision, plan or programme is at draft stage, seeking to involve everyone in your response?
	Have you consulted with civil society organisations representative of the equality grounds, and with staff and/or their representatives when a decision, plan or programme is at draft stage, seeking to involve everyone in your response?
<b>Communication</b>	Have you consulted with civil society organisations representative of the equality grounds, and with staff and/or their representatives when a decision, plan or programme is at draft stage, seeking to involve everyone in your response?
	Have you consulted and coordinated planned action with other key actors and stakeholders working on the response to the issues identified?
<b>Assessing/monitoring impact</b>	Are you gathering and reviewing disaggregated equality data and information on the impact of COVID-19, for example gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity?
	Have you put in place a mechanism to monitor the impact of decisions, policies and plans on different groups, through feedback or complaint mechanisms?
	Have you in place a regular review process whereby your policies and plans are living documents that can be adapted based on emerging evidence from groups experiencing inequality and discrimination?

Read [here](#) for further information on the guidance note to assist public bodies to utilise the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to incorporate equality and human rights considerations in COVID-19 response and recovery for the benefit of staff and service users, as part of their statutory duty.

## HR CORNER



DIGNITY & RESPECT AT WORK	
<b>Who does the policy cover?</b>	All staff at MIC.
<b>Forms of Bullying and Harassment*</b>	Workplace bullying
	Sexual harassment at work
	Harassment (other than sexual harassment)
<b>How do I seek to address such matters?</b>	<p>Informal Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the person responsible to stop the offensive behaviour</li> <li>• Request the assistance of a manager/senior staff member</li> <li>• Initiate a mediation process</li> </ul> <p>Formal Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a formal complaint in writing to the Director of HR</li> <li>• The Director of HR will assess the complaint and contact the employee no later than 7 days from when the complaint was received</li> <li>• If the complaint is within the scope of the Dignity and Respect Policy, an Investigation Team will be established</li> <li>• Following the investigation**, the team will provide a report to the relevant senior manager recommending a course(s) of action</li> </ul>
<b>Can I appeal the outcome?</b>	<p>Either party can appeal the outcome of the investigation.</p> <p>The appeal must be submitted in writing to the relevant Vice-President in the employees reporting line within 5 working days of the outcome of the investigation.</p> <p>A decision will be communicated back to the person within 10 days of receipt of the appeal.</p>



\*See policy [here](#) for definitions of each.

\*\*Please see the policy [here](#) for full details of the investigation process.

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## EVENTS AT MIC

### PLEY Survey Preliminary Finding

Dr Suzanne Egan and researchers in the Department of Psychology in MIC conducted a study to explore the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on young children's lives. The Play and Learning in the Early Years (PLEY) survey, completed by over 500 parents of 1-10 year olds, provides fascinating insights into children's lives in lockdown. Well done to Dr. Egan and her team on their continued work with this research. More information [here](#).

**PLEY Survey Preliminary Findings**  
Play & Learning in the Early Years

**Most children have been affected by the COVID-19 restrictions:**

- **Social distancing** – Parents indicated that nearly all children aged 6 and over, and three quarters of children aged 4-5, understand the restrictions & social distancing
- **Play** – Changed for many children with increases in screen time & outdoor play; a third of children brought information about the virus or restrictions into their play
- **Social relationships** – Most children miss family, friends and playing with other children
- **School** – Most children miss school. Most parents agree it is important to continue school work at home, but it is a source of conflict in over half of families
- **Childcare** – Two thirds of children aged 1-5 years miss childcare

Based on responses of 512 parents. Data collected online between May 21<sup>st</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020

Cognition, Development and Learning Lab, Department of Psychology @MICLimerick

### Autism-Friendly Learning Resource for Summer 2020

MIC collaborated with AsIAm and Supervalu to develop a learning resource toolkit to help those with high support needs prepare during the summer months to return to school in September. The toolkit was launched in July and is available in Supervalu stores nationwide. Congratulations to Dr Lisha O'Sullivan, Dr Margaret Egan, Maria Dervan, PhD student, Niamh Moore, Dev Psy student and Prof Emer Ring, on their contributions to this important resource. Read more [here](#).



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### **Twitter Highlights:**

Follow @MICAthenaSWAN on Twitter to keep up to date. Here's some of the recent twitter stories that may be of interest to you:



Gender differences in the pathways to higher education

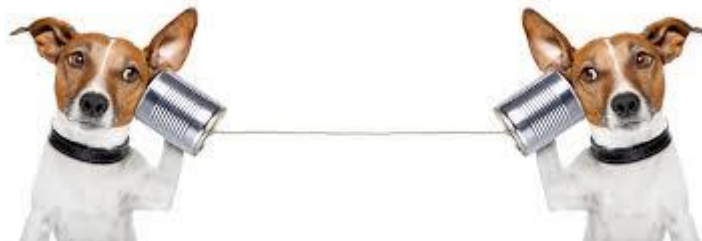


The impact of sex and gender in the current COVID-19 pandemic



'Ethnic diversity matters in Irish classrooms'

### ***TALK TO US***



We would love to hear from you, if you would like to know more about Athena SWAN or would like something included in the Ezine.

Contact Edel on [edel.foster@mic.ul.ie](mailto:edel.foster@mic.ul.ie) or 061 204338.

Follow us on Twitter for updates [@MICAthenaSWAN](https://twitter.com/MICAthenaSWAN)

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