

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Annual Report to
Governing Body
2025 / 2026

16th June 2026

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1. Introduction

South East Technological University Governing Body has established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee of the Governing Body from which it derives its authority and to which it regularly reports. The purpose of the committee is to assist and advise the Governing Body in the performance of its functions by providing governance and oversight through the review of reports and assurances received from the President and the SETU Executive Management Team.

The committee also provides guidance and direction on policy matters associated with the achievement of EDI objectives across the university, supporting an inclusive and accessible university culture where all members of the university community can participate fully and equitably. The Governing Body has appointed Ms Ruth Beadle to be the Chairperson of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Agendas, minutes and Terms of Reference for the EDI Governing Body Committee are available on the [EDI Committee webpage](#).

2. Membership

As per Terms of Reference, the members of the EDI Governing Body Committee are:

Member Name	Role
Ms Ruth Beadle	Chairperson and Independent External Member
Ms Mary Connors Aldridge	Independent External Member
Dr Vivian Rath	Independent External Member
Mr Paul Bennett	Member of the University with knowledge/expertise in EDI
Mr Jeremie Sandot	Member of the University with knowledge/expertise in EDI
Dr Isaac Alshaikh	Member of the University community nominated by the President
Ms Sarah Sartori	Member of the University community nominated by the President
Ms Shauna Whyte	Member of the University community nominated by the President
Ms Lucy Bosch	Student Union Welfare Officer
Ms Erin Foley	Governing Body Nominee, President SETUSU
Mr Derek Sheridan	Governing Body Staff Member
Dr Allison Kenneally	Secretary
Ms Anne Hallinan	Secretariat
Ms Samantha O'Connor	Secretariat

3. Meetings

From October 2025 to May 2026, EDI GB Committee met on 5 occasions. The meeting on 16th October was No Quorum, and an additional meeting was held on 26th November 2025. Under the Terms of Reference, the EDI GB Committee will meet as many times as is required, but at least four times a year. The meetings in January and May were in-person with an online option for members that could not attend in-person.

Meetings Schedule 16/10/2025 – 12/05/2026		
Number of Meetings	Attendance	Dates
Ms Ruth Beadle, Chairperson	6/6	16th October 2025 - No quorum
Dr Allison Kenneally, Secretary	6/6	
Dr Vivian Rath	0/6	
Ms Mary Connors Aldridge	3/6	
Mr David Denieffe	1/6	
Ms Shauna Whyte	4/6	6 th November 2025
Dr Cara Daly	5/6	26 th November 2025
Mr Jeremie Sandot	3/6	
Ms Lucy Bosch	4/6	
Mr Paul Bennett	5/6	13 th January 2026
Ms Erin Foley	3/6	15 th April 2026
Mr Derek Sheridan	5/6	
Dr Isaac Alshaikh	5/6	
Dr Sarah Saratori	3/6	12 th May 2026
Ms Anne Hallinan	5/6	
Ms Samantha O'Connor	6/6	

4. Committee Activities

In carrying out the responsibilities of the EDI GB Committee and to provide assurances to the Governing Body the following matters have been reviewed, considered and approved as required. This report provides an update on key Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives delivered across the University for the period Sept 2025 to May 2026. Activity during this period reflects a structured programme of work across policy development, staff and student engagement, training and capacity building, and sectoral collaboration.

Membership Update

The Terms of Reference were reviewed, and new expressions of interest were acknowledged.

Equality Data Disclosure Campaign

An organisation-wide Equality Data Disclosure Campaign was launched in February 2026 to support improved disclosure of staff data across EDI categories. The campaign was supported by a coordinated communications plan, engagement sessions, and digital materials. A summary report has been completed, indicating improved participation rates and strengthened data quality. The survey will be conducted twice annually to gather additional data. The Chairperson recognised the strong work and high-level of engagement demonstrated by EDI in the forums.

Disability and Caring Supports

The Supporting Employees with Caring Responsibilities Policy was approved by the Governing Body in February 2026. A programme of staff communications, webinars, and awareness initiatives was delivered in partnership with Family Carers Ireland. This activity supported the rollout of the Supporting Employees with Caring Responsibilities Policy and promoted available supports for staff with caring responsibilities. Training has been delivered for management to support the implementation of the policy. A training passport will remain with staff throughout their time in SETU.

2025 Gender Pay Gap Report

The EDI Vice President presented the Gender Pay Gap Report to the committee and noted that the largest gender pay gap exists among PMSS staff, which is a priority area for action under SETU's Gender Equality Action Plan. Discussion focused on next steps, and it was highlighted that there would be ongoing reviews of job descriptions and an increased focus on job advertising and recruitment processes.

Institute of Public Administration (IPA) Governance Board (GB) Effectiveness Review - EDI Comm Extract Jan 2026

The Chairperson presented feedback from the review, which was overall very positive. The need for increased access to training and development opportunities was highlighted. The Traveller Culture Awareness Training delivered during CPD week was a success and it was suggested it could be extended to a wider staff audience. Subsequently, all members of the EDI Committee have had the opportunity to bespoke complete Navigating EDI and Inclusive Leadership Training as part of their work in the Committee.

Progressing Race Equality Action Plan & Communications Campaign – The implementation of the Race Equality Action plan is underway, with many actions around training for EMT and the wider management team already completed. Re the communications campaign, updates are pending on branding, with emphasis on ensuring the importance and clarity of the messaging to be communicated to all staff.

Communications Review: Website, Socials and Newsletters – The large digital screens in Waterford and Carlow are being utilised to promote our work. Newsletters will take the form of a short video format incorporating images and clips going forward. A short video will be produced to showcase the University of Sanctuary students and their progression in SETU.

Disability Policy & Audit

Improvements were reported in EDI data collection. Work on the accessibility audit is to progress in Q3 2026, with a working group being established. A new draft Staff Disability/Reasonable Accommodation Policy is being prepared.

First EDI Annual Report - the first annual report will focus on actions from the EDI Strategic Plan and the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) and will present data that has been systematically tracked and monitored. The annual report launch is scheduled for Autumn 2026.

University Culture including Dignity & Respect

Ms Shauna Whyte updated the committee that as part of the wider culture agenda, HR has placed a university-wide culture audit on its 2026 work plan, with the audit scheduled to begin in the new year. The review will focus on everyday wellbeing issues affecting staff, explore perceptions of culture across the university, and consider how faculties and units can be better supported.

Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) implementation

The committee was updated on the GEAP noting strong progress under Culture, Policy and Leadership, Research and Innovation, and External Engagement and Partnerships, while progress under Teaching, Learning and Student Experience and Infrastructure, Data and Accessibility remained mixed. Updates included the successful staff equality data campaign, rollout of Inclusive Leadership and Equitas programmes, progress on the Race Equality Action Plan, completion of the Disability Census, enhanced inclusive catering, and preparation of the inaugural EDI Annual Report. The Reasonable Accommodation and Menopause policies remain under consultation. Also noted is award-related activity across several faculties and the rebranding and launch of SETU100 as Perspecta initiative, continued delivery of the Skill Up programme, ongoing work to embed EDI into curriculum design and programme approval processes, and continued engagement in national collaborations and research initiatives. Improvements were reported in EDI data collection, Public Sector Duty reporting and committee gender balance, although implementation of Universal Design measures remains a work in progress, along with the Accessibility Audit.

TSVH Action Plan implementation

The committee received an update on the SETU Action Plan 2023–26 to Tackle Sexual Violence and Harassment (TSVH). The update outlined the rollout of Active* Consent and SETU Bystander Intervention training for students, as well as bespoke TSVH, Bystander Intervention, and Disclosure training for staff. A dedicated website section now provides support, reporting information, and access to the anonymous Speak Out tool, with reporting options mapped and published. A new SETU Student Sexual Misconduct Policy was approved by Governing Body recently, and implementation will begin from September 2026. A Staff Policy will follow. Further updates included activities from the 16 Days campaign, Ask for Angela, the Million Stars initiative, the SVH Newsletter, relevant conferences and awards, and recent funding successes for the Consent Matters and Bystander Intervention projects. The Student Sexual Misconduct Policy was submitted to the Policy Review Committee in April 2026 and is scheduled for implementation in September/October 2026.

Training and Capacity Building

Delivery of the Equitas EDI Training Programme was rolled out across campuses throughout the academic term, including workshops on; Inclusive Leadership, Navigating EDI, Disability Awareness, Neurodiversity, Race Equality, Irish Sign Language, EDIT Toolkit, Menopause in the Workplace, L.I.S.T.E.N. (Tackling Gender Based Violence in Education) and Sexual Violence and Harassment. Targeted Race Equality training for EMT managers was delivered, supporting the development of inclusive leadership capability.

Race Equality and Anti-Racism Initiatives

Progress continues to be made on Race Equality initiatives, including the development of a Race awareness campaign and delivery of anti-racism training. SETU is progressing its anti-racism work through participation in a national initiative led by the Higher Education Authority, supporting the development of institutional approaches and practice.

Awards and External Recognition

SETU celebrated a national win for its EDI office at the Education Awards in March 2026, where it received the award for Excellence in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion of the third time in four years, reflecting SETU's commitment to leadership in this space.

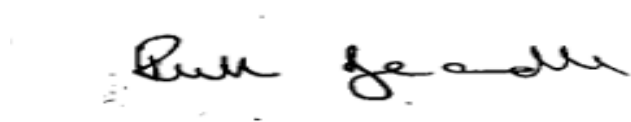
Congratulations to Dr Sarah Sartori, Higher Education Strategic Project Lead, and the Chair of SETU's University of Sanctuary Working Group, on being named this year's recipient at a special presentation during the Vicki Phelan EDI Awards ceremony. Dr Sartori was also named Employee of the Year, at the Diversity in Business Awards in Feb 2026, recognising her exceptional leadership and the profound impact of her work advancing inclusion, social justice and meaningful institutional change across SETU.

Congratulations to Dr. Allison Kenneally, Vice President for EDI, on receiving the Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Leader award at the Diversity in Business Awards in July 2025.

The EDI GB Committee acknowledges and is deeply appreciative of the continued commitment of staff, students and stakeholders in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion across SETU. The Committee remains dedicated to supporting the implementation of institutional EDI priorities and ensuring ongoing governance oversight of progress and impact.

In conclusion, the committee extends gratitude to those who have provided support during the year.

On behalf of the EDI GB Committee:



Ruth Beadle, Chairperson, SETU EDI GB Committee
May 2026