

1. Action plan

Table 32

No.	Description of Action	Basis for Action	Timeframe	Responsible	Measure of success
Section 1: An introduction to the Institution's Athena SWAN Work					
Subsection 1: Governance and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion work					
1.1	The DBS DEI Board will meet quarterly with the DBS DEI steering committee group to give a progress update on the Athena SWAN action plan	As per the terms of reference, the primary role of the DEI Board is to provide advice and guidance to the DEI Steering Group as well as coordinate a number of DEI initiatives. This advisory function helps the Steering Group make informed decisions and develop effective initiatives for the future	Quarterly (First week of every month) 2025-2029	DBS DEI Board members	Report developed for DBS steering committee providing a progress update against agreed DEI initiatives and timelines
1.2	Further Athena SWAN progress updates will be provided to the DBS Board bi-annually	DBS Board fully endorses the Athena SWAN application and will take an active interest in progress against agreed action items	Bi-annually (Last week of Q2 and first week of Q4) 2025-2029	SAT	Report developed for DBS Board of Directors providing a progress update against agreed DEI initiatives and timelines
1.3	Progress updates in relation to DEI will occur bi-annually to the DBS SLT	SLT fully endorses the Athena SWAN application and will take an active interest in progress against agreed action items	Bi-annually Q2 and Q4 at monthly SLT meeting 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture	Report developed for DBS steering committee providing a progress update against agreed DEI initiatives and timelines
1.4	To support the roll out of the 4-year action plan the DEI budget allocation for staff will increase to €25,000 in 2025. Further reviews of this budget will occur per annum to support planned initiatives	Budget aligned to increased DEI initiatives as agreed by DBS Steering Group	Budget increased to €25,000 in 2025 and reviewed per annum thereafter	Head of People and Culture	Head of People and Culture to get approval from President and CFO for budget increase

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1.5	We will continue to recognise staff through our 'Make a Difference' award	The 'Make a Difference' award has been well received with its focus on DEI	Annually The 'Make a Difference' DEI award recognises both staff and students at the Staff and Student Ball.	SLT The President	Nominations linked to DEI specific criteria will be recognised and celebrated per annum
1.6	We will expand our reward and recognition programme to recognise actions taken by staff in a voluntary capacity that support the DEI agenda	This is an additional recognition focused on staff involvement in a voluntary capacity with the local community	Rewards and Recognition programme developed and launched by Q1 2025	SLT The President	Nominations linked to DEI specific criteria in relation to voluntary contributions with the community will be recognised and celebrated per quarter
1.7	We will track and report on diversity metrics, with a specific focus on achieving a 50/50 gender balance across both Management and Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) by 2028.	Our current Management team consists of 26 males (58%) and 19 females (42%), and our SLT comprises 6 males(60%) and 4 females (40%). Aiming for balanced gender representation in leadership and management roles that align with our DEI commitments.	Annually reported in December Q4 2025 Management targets to be achieved: Males (57%) Female (43%) 2026- Management targets to be achieved: Males (55%) Female (45%) 2027- Management targets to be achieved: Males (53%) Female (47%) 2028- Management targets to be achieved: Males (51%) Female (49%) 2029 - Management target males 50% females 50% By 2027 SLT target to be achieved: 50% males and 50% females. Q2 2025	Head of People and Culture	Achievement of a 50/50 gender balance within Management and SLT by 2029; annual reporting on gender diversity progress, with incremental improvements toward the goal each year.

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1.8	We will expand our mandatory training requirements to include Unconscious Bias training for all staff and Inclusive Leadership training for all managers	Unconscious Bias and Inclusive Leadership training has been rolled out to staff and managers but now requires follow-up and refreshing to address turnover. We feel this training is important to categorise as mandatory in our embrace of DEI principles	Q2 2025	Head of People and Culture	Unconscious Bias training for all staff and Inclusive Leadership training for managers will be included as part of the induction programme for new hires. All existing hires will receive follow-up training
1.9	We will continue to implement initiatives to enhance staff engagement, with a focus on improving responses related to DEI topics in the annual Kaplan Employee Engagement Survey.	The Kaplan Employee Engagement Survey includes 6 DEI-related questions. Currently, 3 questions scored above 80% and 3 scored above 70%, resulting in an overall score of 78.8%. Our goal is to achieve a score above 80% for all six questions by Q4 2026.	Annually. The Kaplan survey is usually conducted in Q2/Q3. 2025 - overall score of 80% 2026 - overall score of 82% 2027- Overall score of 83% 2028- Overall score of 84% 2029- Overall score of 85%	DBS DEI Board	Achievement of an overall score of 80% or higher for all DEI-related survey questions by Q4 2026; annual monitoring and reporting of incremental improvements towards this goal.
1.10	In addition to the Kaplan survey, we will launch pulse surveys during the course of the year to target specific DEI themes and focus areas	These surveys will allow us to do a deep dive into specific themes or initiatives that we have launched to assess the positive impact	Conducted once a quarter 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture	Greater than 60% positive response in surveys
1.11	Raise awareness of the code of conduct policy as it applies to the range of protected characteristics	The Kaplan Code of Business Conduct policy is supported with mandatory training	Conducted Annually 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture	Code of conduct policy re-communicated each year

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Subsection 2: The Self-assessment Process					
2.1	Over the next four years we will review bi-annually the demographic representation of the SAT to ensure it is balanced	The SAT requires more diversity and we will actively seek this with membership	Bi-annually Q2 and Q4 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture The President	Increase in the demographic representation of the SAT with a balance of faculty, non-faculty, staff and students, and other protected characteristics
2.2	By Q1 2026, we will design and implement targeted actions to increase staff consultation response rates to a minimum of 28%.	Increasing the response rate is essential for gathering meaningful feedback to inform DEI initiatives. Achieving an increased response rate will enhance representation in our data and support evidence-based decision-making.	Designed appropriate actions to increase response rate by Q1 2026 Response rate targets: Q4 2026- 28% Q4 2027- 30% Q4 2028- 32% Q4 2029- 34%	SAT	Achievement of a 28% response rate by Q4 2026, with incremental increases in response rate annually; regular monitoring and adjustments to encourage participation.
2.3	The SAT will meet every eight weeks to evaluate the action progress	Frequent meetings to ensure progress against action items are tracked	Every eight weeks 2025-2029	SAT	Meetings held every eight weeks
2.4	Succession plans will be put in place for the SAT members, should turnover occur and this will be proactively planned and managed	Succession plans will be actioned on a bi-annual basis meeting the criteria set out in action item 2.1	Bi-annually reviewed Q2, Q4 2025-2029	SAT	Successors identified through bi-annual succession plans to ensure SAT has full membership and represents a balanced demographic

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2.5	We will communicate all Athena SWAN progress updates to our staff through the monthly DBS DEI newsletter	We publish a monthly DBS newsletter focused on DEI topics. We will now include a section on Athena SWAN and outline progress against our action items	Monthly 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture	Progress against Athena SWAN action items published in DBS DEI newsletter
2.6	We will create a dedicated page on our staff intranet to promote DEI activities, policies, training and any updates in relation to Athena SWAN	Staff intranet has been updated and DEI news is published but there is no single dedicated page	Q2 – 2025	Head of People and Culture	Single page created on staff intranet dedicated to DEI
2.7	We will develop and implement a framework to systematically account for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work in staff workload allocation.	Recognizing and including DEI work in staff workload is essential towards encouraging active participation and ensuring that DEI contributions are valued. A clear framework will provide guidance on how DEI work is measured and rewarded	Framework developed by Q3 2025 Survey conducted in Q2 2026 to assess feedback.	Head of People and Culture, DEI Board	Completion and rollout of the DEI workload framework. Positive feedback from staff on DEI workload recognition and clear inclusion in workload allocations.

Section 2: An Assessment of the Institution’s Gender Equality Context and, Where Relevant, Wider Equality Context					
Subsection 1: Overview of the institution and its context					
3.1	We will conduct an annual review of DEI-related policies to ensure they align with and reflect our ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for both staff and students.	Regular policy reviews help ensure that DEI commitments are current, comprehensive, and responsive to the evolving needs of staff and students.	Annually Q3 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture. Any changes approved by SLT	Completion of annual policy review with updates implemented as necessary; feedback from staff and students indicating increased awareness and alignment with DEI values.
3.2	We will continue to support the establishment and growth of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) across DBS to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all staff.	ERGs provide essential peer support, enhance DEI awareness, and foster a sense of belonging among diverse groups within DBS. Supporting ERGs aligns with our DEI commitment and encourages greater employee engagement.	LGBTQ+ ERG created Q4 2024 Target one ERG created per annum 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture, DEI Board	Increase in number of active ERGs; regular ERG meetings and events held; positive feedback from ERG participants on impact and support received

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3.3	We will develop and implement DEI policies specifically addressing visible and non-visible disabilities, in collaboration with the Disability Federation of Ireland, to better support staff and students with disabilities.	Focused policies on visible and non-visible disabilities will foster a more inclusive environment and provide clearer support structures for individuals with diverse accessibility needs. Partnering with the DFI will ensure these policies are comprehensive and aligned with best practices.	Completion and rollout of disability-focused DEI policies by Q4 2025	Head of People and Culture, DEI Board	Completion and rollout of disability-focused DEI policies; positive feedback from staff and students on accessibility improvements; increased awareness and engagement in disability support initiatives.
3.4	We will continue to facilitate events and initiatives that enhance staff and student experiences, promoting a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion within DBS.	Regular DEI focused events and initiatives foster an inclusive community, strengthen DEI values, and improve the overall experience for staff and students.	Twice a quarter 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture, DEI Board, ERG's.	Successful execution of quarterly DEI events and initiatives; increased participation and engagement rates among staff and students; positive feedback indicating enhanced DEI culture and environment.
3.5	We will continue to monitor our gender representation for both faculty and non-faculty roles to ensure that we continue to be aligned with benchmark, with the overall objective of further improving the sector standard	We want to continue to align with the sector standard and where possible improve the sector standard in relation to gender representation across the college	Reviewed annually Q4 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture	Report submitted annually to DBS Steering Board showing results as compared to sector standard
*3.6	We will actively recruit to further improve the diversity of our ethnic representation for both faculty and non-faculty roles	We currently have over 37 different nationalities across the College in both faculty and non-faculty roles and we wish to continue with this diverse representation and where possible improve upon it	Reviewed annually Q4 2025- 2029	Head of People and Culture	Report submitted annually to DBS Steering Board showing positive results of ethnic representation year on year

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3.7	As part of our talent management and succession planning, we will continue to strengthen our succession pipelines by identifying gaps and recruiting and or promoting diverse staff	In 2023, a new talent management and succession planning framework was developed for DBS. This is in the process of being updated to reflect organisational changes and gaps	Reviewed Bi annually at SLT meetings Q2, Q4 2025 -2029	Head of People and Culture The President	Successors identified for each material role based on the timeline of successor readiness. Any succession gaps are actively managed either through promotion or external hire
3.8	We will actively recruit more females for Academic Council membership to close the gender gap	For Academic Council membership, gender representation in DBS trends towards males more than females compared to the benchmark data which trends towards more females than males. The gender distribution of DBS shows a 35.72% difference compared to the benchmark with trends towards females by 3.16%.	Gender representation across Academic Councils reported per annum Q4 2025 targeted gap less than 30% Q4 2026- targeted gap less than 20% Q4 2027- targeted gap less than 10%	Academic Dean Head of People and Culture	Active recruitment of females onto Academic Councils. Improvement in gender representation of females across Academic Councils
*3.9	We will actively review institutional committee membership with targeted recruitment of females for the majority of committees where there is under-representation	While some institutional committees have a balanced gender representation, others don't, so we would like to close the gap by using targeted recruitment	Gender representation across institutional committees Reviewed annually Q4 2025 - 2029	The President	Active recruitment of females onto institutional committees. Balanced gender representation in institutional committees

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*3.10	We will continue to monitor gender representation across heads of faculty departments, heads of professional units and management to ensure we maintain a gender balance	Our focus is to ensure as the organisation changes and grows that we prioritise the gender balance of appointments, either through promotion or external hires to ensure gender representation is balanced	Gender representation across heads of faculty departments, heads of professional units and management reported Reviewed annually Q4 2025 - 2029	Head of People and Culture The President	Active recruitment of females across heads of faculty departments, heads of professional units and management. Balanced gender representation at management level
3.11	We will use the most updated census return to update benchmarking data for DBS on available protected criteria information	We have not regularly used census information as a form of benchmarking and we believe it is a useful source of data	Reviewed annually upon receipt of report 2025 to 2029	Head of People and Culture	We will benchmark per annum against census information and report findings to the DBS DEI steering committee

Subsection 2: Supporting and advancing Faculty and Research staff careers

4.1	We will analyse recruitment materials for gender-specific language and revise them as needed to foster inclusivity	We would like to strengthen our recruitment processes to ensure our materials and language reflect our focus around DEI	Q1 2025	HR Operations Manager	All materials and related recruitment communications are updated to reflect our DEI principles
*4.2	We will build upon the two Faculty career paths developed outlining clear criteria for promotion based on technical and soft skills training needs	As part of the ADWG work we have recreated two faculty career paths. The next step will be to outline clear criteria for promotion	Q4 2025	Head of People and Culture Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production	Clear criteria for promotion based on soft skills and technical skills will be developed and communicated to staff

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4.3	We will audit how faculty are progressing with regards to development and research in relation to our recently launched CIPD policy	CIPD policy recently launched. We would like to measure effectiveness in relation to staff development and staff research activity	Reviewed annually Q4 2025 to 2029	Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production	Policy audited per annum. Improvements seen year on year
4.4	We will review and enhance the development review process to ensure it facilitates meaningful, qualitative discussions around career progression for all staff.	A robust development review process supports career growth, employee satisfaction, and retention by ensuring that discussions about career progression are meaningful and aligned with individual goals.	Develop and launch individual development plans aligned to DBS training and third party providers. Q1 2025 Provide training to support managers in conducting qualitative conversations with staff. Q1 2025	Head of People and Culture, SLT	Positive feedback from staff on the quality of career discussions; measurable increase in staff engagement and satisfaction with career progression opportunities; regular monitoring of career development outcomes.
4.5	We will utilise the DBS talent management and succession planning framework to facilitate conversations with staff about individual development plans	We have partnered with LinkedIn to avail of their training offerings. We are working with the SLT and their teams to establish individual development plans tied to training and succession plans	Q1 2025	SLT The President	Individual development plans in place for all staff members. Talent management and succession framework updated to reflect changes in organisational structure
4.6	We will operationalise staff reviews further so that there is a clear link between individual development plans and career progression	DBS is undergoing a culture review linked to strategy. Staff reviews are in place but need to be updated to reflect revised culture	Fully operationalised by Q2 2025.	SLT	Staff reviews updated. Strong communications plan in place to reflect revised culture priorities linked to strategy

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4.7	To gain a deeper understanding of staff perceptions regarding the gender pay gap, we will conduct focus groups and interviews to complement the collected mean and median gender pay gap data.	Quantitative gender pay gap data provides a baseline, but qualitative insights from staff will help us understand perceptions, challenges, and potential actions to address the gap more effectively.	Conduct focus group and interviews Q3 2025 Actionable insights documented Q4 2025 Targeted strategies to address gender pay gap issues based on feedback Q4 2025	Head of People and Culture	Completion of focus groups and interviews with actionable insights documented; identification of key themes and perceptions; development of targeted strategies to address gender pay gap issues based on feedback.
Subsection 3: Supporting and advancing professional, managerial and support staff careers					
5.1	We will further develop our relationship with AHEAD to facilitate the appointment of applicants with disabilities	We have an existing relationship with AHEAD and we would like to develop this further	Meet with AHEAD annually. Successful appointment of applicants with disabilities on short term assignments. One per year 2025 to 2029	Head of Student Experience	Successful appointments of applicants with disabilities on short term assignments. One per year
5.2	We will arrange college-wide awareness sessions on disabilities in partnership with the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) to promote understanding and inclusivity for individuals with visible and non-visible disabilities.	Collaborating with DFI will enhance awareness of disability-related issues, foster an inclusive culture, and equip staff and students with knowledge to support individuals with disabilities.	Arrange college wide awareness session Q3 2025 Pulse survey launched in Q4 2026 to assess staff and student feedback in relation to disability awareness.	Head of People and Culture	Successful delivery of disability awareness sessions; increased staff and student understanding as reflected in feedback surveys; ongoing engagement with DFI for relevant resources and updates.
5.3	To gain a deeper understanding of staff perceptions regarding disabilities across the College, we will conduct focus groups and interviews to complement the quantitative data collected on disability.	Quantitative data provides a baseline for understanding disability representation, but qualitative insights from staff will reveal perceptions, challenges, and areas for improvement to support an inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities.	Arrange focus groups and interviews by Q4 2026 Identification of key themes and areas for action Q1 2027; Development of targeted initiatives to address identified needs and enhance inclusivity Q1 2027.	Head of People and Culture	Completion of focus groups and interviews with comprehensive insights documented; identification of key themes and areas for action; development of targeted initiatives to address identified needs and enhance inclusivity.

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*5.4	We will continue to report per annum on our gender pay gap seeking improvements on our mean and median results	This is a government directive where data should be analysed at the end of June based on median and mean calculations	Reviewed annually based on 30 June data. Published Q4 2025 to 2029	Head of People and Culture	Improvement in mean and median results year on year
5.5	To continue supporting talent management and succession planning we will publish training and development opportunities for staff via a shared calendar on the staff intranet	We regularly publish training courses but would like to develop a calendar on the intranet so that staff can plan ahead	Calendar published annually Q1 2025-2029	Head of People and Culture	Calendar published and regularly updated as training courses are organised
*5.6	We will develop and launch a College wide high potential programme for diverse young talent that supports both specialist and generalist roles across faculty and non-faculty	We would like to target and develop diverse high potential young talent to strengthen our succession plans and to bring more diversity to our talent pipelines	Launch program Q3 2025	The President Head of People and Culture	High potential young talent programme developed and launched. Success measured through number of participant promotions
5.7	We will launch and train specific staff across the College to facilitate career coaching	We would like to increase capability across the College by organising career coaching for nominated staff to support talent management and succession plans	Q1 2026	Head of People and Culture	External provider organised to train nominated staff in career coaching to support
*5.8	To assist in improving the gender pay gap, we will develop and launch a high potential women's programme to support career development and promotions	We would like to target and develop high potential women to strengthen our succession plans and to bring more diversity to our talent pipelines and committees	Q2 2026	The President Head of People and Culture	High potential women's programme developed and launched. Success measured through number of participant promotions and committee membership

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Subsection 4: Evaluating Culture, Inclusion and Belonging					
*6.1	We will set up workshops guiding staff on what to do in the event of witnessing bullying, harassment and/or discrimination	While staff are aware of the policies in relation to bullying and harassment, they do not feel equipped as to what they should do in the event of witnessing a situation	Q2 2025	Head Of People and Culture	Focus groups/webinars will be organised, supported by communication in the monthly newsletter and the staff intranet Pulse survey indicating a positive staff response to increased awareness of what to do in the event of witnessing bullying, harassment and/or discrimination
6.2	We will promote our DBS Speak-Up policy in the event of a breach of the Code of Business Conduct	This has been previously communicated. We feel this is an important topic and we would like to continue to raise awareness	Reviewed and promoted annually Q3 2025 to 2029	Head of People and Culture	Will continue to raise awareness by highlighting it on the staff intranet, in our induction programme and through College-wide communications
*6.3	We will organise additional training and education sessions for staff to raise further awareness on trans and gender non-binary issues to coincide with the recently launched Gender Identity and Expression policy	The policy has been launched but we feel there needs to be more education and awareness around this topic	Appropriate training organised annually 2025 to 2029	Staff DEI Officer	We will continue to raise awareness by highlighting trans and gender non-binary issues on the staff intranet, the DEI newsletter, and will organise a lunch and learn per annum dedicated to this topic
6.4	We will further provide education and awareness to support our menopause policy	Menopause Policy in place. We organised an external speaker as part of the promotion of the policy. We would like to continue to raise awareness	Education session to be organised annually Q3 2025 to 2029	Staff DEI Officer	Will continue to raise awareness by highlighting it on staff intranet, the DEI newsletter and will organise a lunch n learn per annum dedicated to this topic

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6.5	We will roll out initiatives for men's health in the workplace to support our November DEI newsletter, which focuses on men's wellbeing	We have highlighted mental health each November but would like to focus on this further	Education session to be organised for November 2025 to coincide with men's wellbeing.	Staff DEI Officer	Lunch and learn organised around men's health. Mental health highlighted in the DEI newsletter. External speaker organised
6.6	We will further communicate and promote our agile working framework to all employees	We have a three pronged approach to agile working based on the degree of engagement with staff and/or students the role has. The SLT actively communicates this to their team. We will continue this communication to ensure all staff and in particular new hires are aware of our agile working policy	Quarterly 2024-2028	Head of People and Culture	Reminders of the agile policy communicated every quarter on staff intranet
6.7	We will revise the letter sent by HR to staff returning from maternity leave to include information about accessing breastfeeding resources	DBS' maternity leave policy addresses breastfeeding. Should a staff wish to avail of this then a room is allocated to them. Our letters will be updated to reflect this	June 2024	HR Operations Manager	Letter revised and updated
6.8	We will include more diverse imagery reflective of both of our domestic and international student populations	DBS website imagery whilst somewhat diverse reflects the domestic market rather than the international market which we now predominantly operate in	Q2 2025	Marketing Manager Chief Commercial officer	Imagery updated to reflect international and domestic markets

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6.9	We will conduct a student survey to capture equality data across seven categories (sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, gender, gender identity, and marital status), aligning it with staff equality data, and will expand DEI and consent workshops for all new students and staff.	Aligning student equality data with staff data helps ensure consistent reporting and supports targeted DEI initiatives. Facilitating DEI workshops aims to increase awareness and foster an inclusive environment.	Survey completed by Q4 2025, Facilitate other DEI workshops focused on protected criteria conducted bi annually Q1 Q3 2025 to 2029	Head of People and Culture Head of Student Experience	Completion of a student survey by Q4 2025 with comprehensive data collated across all categories; increased participation of new students and staff in DEI workshops.
6.10	We will analyse staff educational qualifications by gender to expand on staff equality data, aligning this analysis to the student data presented in Table 35.	Analysing staff qualifications by gender will provide insights into potential disparities and inform DEI strategies, aligning staff data metrics with those established for students	Data analysis to be completed by Q4 2025 and presented to the DEI Board	Head of People and Culture	Completion of a comprehensive report on staff educational qualifications by gender, with findings used to inform future DEI initiatives.
*6.11	We will further roll out more DEI and consent workshops to students and staff	All new students must complete a DEI and consent module as part of their induction. We will expand this to all new staff. Cultural Awareness workshops are organised for staff through the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS). These will be made available before each new student intake	Expand to staff from September 2024	Head of Student Experience	Number of new students and staff who complete this module as part of their induction. Existing staff will participate in culture workshops to avail of this training
6.12	We will conduct a needs assessment survey to identify specific challenges faced by students with caring responsibilities and develop policies and resources accordingly	We currently don't have this in place. We will be researching best practice through AHEAD and AWARE and other third level institutions and from this our policies and resources will formulate	January 2025	Head of Student Experience DEI officer for students	Policies and resources in place

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6.13	We will continue our scholarship programs for both domestic and International students to support our community and give access to education for disadvantaged learners	These full academic scholarships are targeted at domestic underprivileged learners who otherwise would not be able to afford to attend a third level education. Scholarships are also awarded in conjunction with Government of Ireland International Education Scholarships and Irish Aid Programmes	Per annum 2024-2028	Chief Commercial Officer	Number of scholarships offered and taken up. Minimum of three per annum
6.14	We will continue to seek DEI accreditations to further embed DEI within our college	Over the last 18 months DBS have been shortlisted in external awards for our DEI work. We have also attained bronze and silver accreditation from the Irish Centre for Diversity. We would like to continue this progress	Q1 2026	Head of People and Culture	Achieve Gold accreditation from the Irish Centre for Diversity by Q1 2026