

Annual report for 2021 on the Implementation of the Framework for Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence.

Introduction

1. In 2019 the then Minister of Higher Education, Mary Mitchell-O'Connor, published "Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive - Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions". This report set out a framework for action for the whole of the Higher Education Sector aimed at preventing sexual violence and harassment.
2. The Institute set up a working group to consider how to respond to the framework and in early 2021 a four-year Action Plan (2021-2024) was submitted to the HEA. This Action Plan set out the actions across a number of areas that the institute would take to address and prevent sexual violence and harassment. One of the actions is for an Annual Report to be made to the Governing Body outlining progress, and this paper constitutes that report.

Overview of progress

3. IT Sligo's full report to the HEA on progress on implementing the framework is attached as Appendix A. The framework identifies 15 outcomes and overall progress is reported using a colour coded rating system, and IT Sligo's performance is set out below:

Achieved	2
In Progress	12
Planned	1
No Progress	0

4. This represents solid progress in Year 1 of the plan.
5. Examples of the actions that IT Sligo has taken include;
 - A representative Institute Working Group, jointly chaired by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President Online Development, has been established to oversee implementation of the action plan.
 - Training on Consent and Disclosures has been provided to the Working Group, the Executive Committee and Senior Management Team delivered by Sligo Rape Crisis Centre.
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing Project Officer appointed in August on 2-year contract to support the implementation of Action Plan in addition to implementing the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework.
 - Active*Consent workshops has been provided for students although uptake has been low.
 - Anonymous Online Reporting Tool "Speak Out" has been launched [Speak Out](#) to encourage the reporting of sexual violence and harassment and to provide information on supports available to those who have suffered sexual violence and harassment.
 - A Consent webpage has been created which provides information, training resources and details of support services available to students [Consent - Institute of Technology Sligo \(itsligo.ie\)](#)

6. Whilst there has been solid progress in 2021, further work is required, and the Action Plan sets out actions for the years ahead. Particular priorities for Year 2 include;
- Embedding Active*Consent workshops in the formal Faculty Induction programmes for all 1st Years in 2022/23 to increase uptake of the workshops. Attendance rates at these workshops was under 20% in 2021 and this needs to be dramatically increased.
 - Roll out Consent and Disclosure awareness training for all staff.
 - The Atlantic Technological University needs to approve and resource a new Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy on designation day. None of the ATU partners had a specific Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy, so the decision was made to develop one for the new University as opposed to developing one within each Institute.
 - Analyse and report on the disclosures made through Speak Out.
 - Continue to run campaigns in collaboration with the Student's Union raising awareness of Active*Consent training, Consent, Disclosure and the supports available to students and staff.

Summary

7. The Institute has made solid progress in 2021 in implementing the action plan to address Sexual Violence and Harassment. The structures and building block are now mostly in place. In future years the Institute needs to build on initial steps to create a culture where students and staff feel safe and respected and where sexual harassment and violence are not tolerated.

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