



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

REPORT ON THE GENDER PAY GAP 2024

University
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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2024

1	Executive Summary	3
2	Introduction	5
3	Gender Pay Gap Data.....	9
4	Commentary on Gender Pay Gap (GPG) by staff category.....	11
5	Key Gender Equality Issues and Institutional Responses to Date	17
6	Proposed Actions.....	23
7	Conclusion.....	23

1 Executive Summary

This report sets out the gender pay gap (GPG) for Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway in 2024, analysing the key issues which drive the GPG and establishing existing initiatives and further plans to address the gap. Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway is committed to the progression of gender equality and recognises that the GPG is one aspect of our efforts to address the gendered nature of inequality for staff at the University.

Accordingly, the University's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 explicitly states that we are committed to significantly reducing the GPG and in this regard the University of Galway has been calculating and reporting the gender pay gap since 2019 with baseline data from 2018, well ahead of the current legislative requirement to do so.

The GPG data indicates a modest improvement in the GPG in our university over this period from 20% mean GPG in 2018 to 15.9% in 2024 albeit not always linear year on year (Table 1).

Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
2024 = 15.9%	2024 = 14.4%
2023 = 18.4%	2023 = 17.4%
2022 = 18.6%	2022 = 15.5%
2021 = 18.0%	2021 = 10.9%
2020 = 17.9%	2020 = 12.0%
2019 = 17.9%	2019 = 12.0%
2018 = 20.0%	2018 = 18.4%

Table 1: Ollscoil na Gaillimhe – University of Galway's: Gender Pay Gap Data 2018-2024

Within the University it is acknowledged that reducing the GPG is a substantial challenge, as is evidenced by the relatively slow rate of change since 2018. It is well known that our university has had a difficult history in gender equality, the historical impact of which continues to feature in the profile and distribution of men and women across the institution and in our gender pay gap. In this context we remain steadfast in our commitment to address the GPG while recognising that it will require sustained action over a longer period of time to achieve our objective of a significant reduction.

We are a learning institution, and the data gathered and analysed to date has generated key insights and opportunities to respond in an effective manner in the wider context of a long-term commitment to gender equality. In recognition of the progress to date in addressing gender inequality, in 2021 we secured funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) for a three-year equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) programme of work. This funding is currently being used to support a programme to widen and deepen the scope of the work on gender equality, including a specific emphasis on enhancing the data infrastructure and management of same. We have also received funding from the HEA to lead a national initiative in the higher education sector to analyse and better understand the complexity of the GPG, with all its moving parts, with a view to proposing and implementing impactful, meaningful actions in this regard. As the lead partner in the implementation of this project, we are mindful of the opportunity that this brings for a sector wide analysis of the key drivers of the gender pay gap, differentiation within the sector and the potential to model effective interventions to ascertain what measures are most constructive and impactful in reducing the GPG.

Dataset

The University's GPG is calculated according to headcount rather than full-time equivalent (FTE), as is sometimes used by organisations. Although Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway has conducted annual audits and reported its GPG for 6 prior years (2018-2023), there are some notable differences between the methodology used to calculate the GPG in prior years (2018-2021) and the subsequent years (2022-2024). Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway GPG (2018-2021) is based on a snapshot of employees' pay on March 31st of each year, whereas the 2022-2024 GPG under the new Irish regulations takes into account employees' remuneration for the 12-month period preceding the snapshot date of 30th June annually.

As of 30th June 2024, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway employs 2,862 staff: 1013 academics, 783 researchers and 1066 Professional, Managerial and Support (PMS) staff.

Key Findings

For the 2024 GPG, based on 2,862 staff across the organisation; the mean gender pay gap is 15.9% and the median pay gap is 14.4%. This infers that there is a difference of 15.9% in the average hourly pay of men and women expressed as a percentage of average hourly pay for men regardless of the nature of the work, role or seniority. Or, when we compare median hourly pay, a woman earns 85.6c for every €1 a man earns.

The GPG is consistently most pronounced in the academic staff category (mean 20%) which largely reflects the representation of men and women in senior academic grades. In contrast, the median GPG (14.8%) is primarily driven by Professional, Managerial and Support (PMS) staff grades. The GPG data for PMS staff shows that men are more likely to occupy higher grades, even though there are substantially more female staff in this staff category overall. This points to the main issue being the lack of upward mobility for all PMS staff. For research staff, the mean pay gap is 4.5%, and the median is 3%. Since this cohort does not contribute greatly to the institution's GPG, this report will focus more on the academic and PMS staff categories.

Responses

The final section of the report details the institutional commitment to gender equality, documenting the range of initiatives and progress to date. In addition, the report identifies a number of progressive actions at institutional level to further interrogate the GPG data at a more granular level in order to generate deeper insights. This is required to inform targeted initiatives and interventions that can maximise impact in reducing the GPG.

2 Introduction

2.1 Overview

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway’s Report on the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) 2024 documents the staff profile of the University, establishes the legislative basis for reporting, and differentiates between the GPG and equal pay statutory provisions. *Section 3: Gender Pay Gap Data* provides a detailed breakdown of the 2024 data, disaggregated in accordance with the regulations. *Section 4: Commentary on Gender Pay Gap* analyses the data in the context of the key findings and insights generated, and *Section 5: Key Gender Equality Issues and Institutional Responses to Date*, documents existing and planned initiatives to reduce the GPG. Additionally, *Section 6: Proposed Actions* builds on existing initiatives to illustrate the necessity of an integrated and multifaceted approach to reducing the GPG. *Section 7: Other Relevant Information*, highlights Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway’s commitment to enhancing awareness and effectiveness in responding to the GPG in the higher education sector, with reference to a national project led by the University.

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway Profile

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway, established in 1845, is a globally focused research-led university with a commitment to top quality teaching across a range of key areas of expertise. According to *QS World University Rankings 2025*, University of Galway is ranked 273rd in the world and has been increasing its global reach and reputation over the past decade.

In the academic year 2023/24, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway has over 19,500 registered students across 70 undergraduate and over 200 postgraduate degree pathways in 4 Colleges and 20 Schools. Additionally, the Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development (CALPD) offers part-time and evening courses. Notably, 60% of all registered students are female (Table 2).

Student	Female	% Female	Male	% Male
Undergraduate	9,130	61%	5777	39%
Postgraduate	2780	59%	1,968	41%

Table 2: Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway Registered Students: Academic Year 2023/24

Category	Total	Female	% Female	Male	% Male
Academic	1013	516	50.9%	497	49.9%
Research	783	405	51.7%	378	48.4%
Professional/ Administrative	1066	747	70.1%	319	29.6%
Total Staff	2,862	1,668	58.3%	1,194	42%

Table 3: Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway Staff Profile: June 2024

2.1.1 Reducing the GPG: A Strategic Imperative

The University’s Strategic Plan 2020-25: *Shared Vision Shaped by Values* articulates a set of core values, developed through consultation with the wider university community, of openness, respect, excellence, and sustainability. The Strategic Plan explicitly commits to significantly reducing the gender pay gap (GPG). As part of the commitment to reducing the GPG, the University has undertaken GPG data gathering and analysis

on an annual basis since 2019 (using the 2018 baseline in the first instance of reporting). GPG reporting is one aspect of the wider strategy to address gender equality and female participation rates across the full range of work-related activity. Accordingly, this report provides an overview of the primary data and analysis of the GPG in 2024, along with the measures introduced to date to address gender inequality, inclusive of responding to the pay gap. In addition, this report provides further contextual information which locates these measures in a longer-term institutional context, emanating from the Task Force on Gender Equality established by the University in 2015. The University Management Team consider that while there is evidence of progress in relation to academic promotion, gender balance in representation, governance and institutional infrastructure, alongside gender equality plans with targeted actions, work to reduce the gender pay gap is an ongoing process. Furthermore, reducing the gender pay gap is understood to be inextricably linked to achievement of gender equality at all levels as a matter of strategic importance in recruitment, retention and progression.

2.2 Career Structure and Salary Scale

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's academic career structure currently includes the following grades: Lecturer Below the Bar (LBB), Lecturer Above the Bar (LAB), Lecturer, Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor (SL), Prof In, Personal Professor (PP) and Established Professor (EP). Staff in these grades account for nearly 75% of all academic staff in the University; salaries¹ are summarised in Table 4 below. Historically, staff at the LBB could apply for non-competitive progression to LAB after 12 months service however both of these grades have been phased out with appointments directly to the new Lecturer grade allowing for a simpler progression route, while not disadvantaging either existing staff or new entrants into the Lecturer grade. Prior to 2020, promotion to SL was competitive, and calls for promotion to SL were irregular. A new academic promotion scheme that is criterion-based with bi-annual calls was introduced in December 2019. While the promotion scheme is directly addressing the level of gender inequalities within the academic career trajectory, nonetheless, limited opportunities in the previous promotion scheme have resulted in institutional legacy issues which are still impacting the GPG at Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway, as will be discussed later.

Grade	No of Points on Scale	Salary Range
Lecturer Below the Bar (LBB)	11	€49,757 - €69,411
Lecturer Above the Bar (LAB)	5	€77,750 - €98,523
Lecturer	10	€61,758 - €98,523
Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor (SL)	8	€80,597 - €114,215
Professor(In)	6	€100,442 - €134,254
Personal Professor(PP)	1	€162,404
Established Professor(EP)	6	€154,497 - €175,326

Table 4: Academic Grades/Salary Range (June 2024)

There are four Research Staff grades: Research Assistant (RA), Postdoctoral Researcher / Research Associate, Research Fellow (RF) and Senior Research Fellow (SRF). Progression from RF to SRF is possible where an individual researcher meets certain criteria, but the number of researchers who progress is low as contracts tend to be relatively short term, predominantly less than two years.

The remaining cohorts of staff comprise administrative and technical, commonly known as Professional, Managerial and Support Staff (PMS). In 2022, the Human Resources department introduced a job-sizing scheme which has provided opportunities for re-grading of posts up to and including Grade 5.

¹ Salary Grades are based of the Post 95 Salary scale

Furthermore, while there hasn't been an institution-wide campaign targeting PMS staff promotion, there have been considerable opportunities via competitive internal vacancies up to Administrative Officer grade and external competition for grades above.

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's GPG report 2024 is based on the following categories and contracted hours:

- Academic: 40 hours (staff in this group do not have a specific number of contracted hours, so a notional working week of 40 hours was used to complete hourly pay rates)
- Part-time teaching assistants (PTTA): 37 hours
- Professional, Managerial and Support Staff: 39 hours for technicians, and 36 for all other staff in this category unless specified otherwise in their contract of employment
- Research: 39 hours

Pay elements included basic pay, and related duties payments, allowances (Head of School Allowance, Mobility Allowance, Pay Allowance), (non-pensionable) piecework (corrections, etc.)². Excluded pay elements comprised - pay in lieu of holidays, part-time work – academic/miscellaneous, and pay arrears. The University does not pay bonuses or benefit in kind to staff, so these were not included in payroll data.

2.3 The Legislation

Legislative Context

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 has introduced a legislative basis for gender pay gap reporting in Ireland, with new regulations under the Act published in June 2022, and amended in 2024. Organisations with over 250 employees were asked to report on their Gender Pay Gap for the first time in 2022 and from 2024, organisations with 150 employees are required to report on their gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap (GPG) is designed to capture the extent to which women are represented evenly across an organisation in salary terms. It is usually reported in terms of mean and median pay gaps. The mean (average) GPG is most commonly reported nationally and internationally. It is the difference between the mean (average) hourly pay of men, and the mean (average) hourly pay of women expressed as a percentage of average hourly pay for men in an organisation regardless of the nature of the work, role or seniority. The mean represents the 'typical' salary of all employees and is of particular interest since it summarises salary differences for the entire cohort and its calculation includes every individual member of staff. As such, it is sensitive to any outliers. Therefore, in an organisation with a large mean GPG, typically most highly paid staff are men, while women are overrepresented among the lower paid. The median GPG represents the earnings of the typical member of staff; if all staff are listed by their earnings from highest to lowest, the median pay is that of the person in the middle of the lists of male and female employees. The median pay gap is not influenced by any outliers and so reflects data for 'typical' individuals. Together, both metrics highlight the impact of an organisation's employment and pay practices and help explain the drivers of pay differentials.

The GPG should not be confused with the concept of equal pay for equal work or pay parity – the right to equal pay for 'like work' is set out in the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 (EEA).

The GPG does not indicate discrimination or an absence of equal pay for equal value work - it reports a gender representation gap. If women hold more of the lower paid jobs in an organisation than men, the gender pay gap is usually wider. In anticipation of the legislative requirements under the Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway initiated the Gender Pay Gap project in 2019 and working with external consultants, have conducted annual audits and reported the GPG since 2019

² These include: Correction of scripts, correction of essays, correction of orals, correction of practicals, essay correctors, undergrad invigilator, lab demonstration, payments for major thesis, standard invigilator, teaching evening arts.

prior to the legislative requirement in 2022.

The University's GPG is calculated according to headcount rather than full-time equivalent (FTE). Since 2022, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's GPG takes into account employees' remuneration for the 12-month period preceding the snapshot date of 30th June annually.

2.3 Specific Legislative Reporting Requirements

In accordance with the new regulations under the Act published in June 2022 ([Regulations for GPG reporting](#)), this report sets out the following information:

- Difference between the **mean** hourly pay of male and female employees
- Difference between the **median** hourly pay of male and female employees
- Difference between the **mean** hourly pay of male and female **part-time** employees;
- Difference between the **median** hourly pay of male and female **part-time** employees;
- Difference between the **mean** hourly pay of male and female employees **on temporary contracts**;
- Difference between the **median** hourly pay of male and female employees **on temporary contracts**;
- The percentages of male and female employees who fall into quartile pay bands.

In addition to the presentation of the data, the report also considers the following as part of the overall analysis of the data:

- Reasons for any gaps identified in pay between men and women
- Actions that will be taken to address the gaps
- Any other relevant information.

3 Gender Pay Gap Data

For the 2024 GPG report, based on 2,862 staff across the organisation; the mean GPG is 15.9% and the median GPG is 14.4%. This infers that there is a difference of 15.9% in the average hourly pay of men and women expressed as a percentage of average hourly pay for men regardless of the nature of the work, role or seniority. Or, when we compare median hourly pay, a woman earns 85.6c for every €1 a man earns.

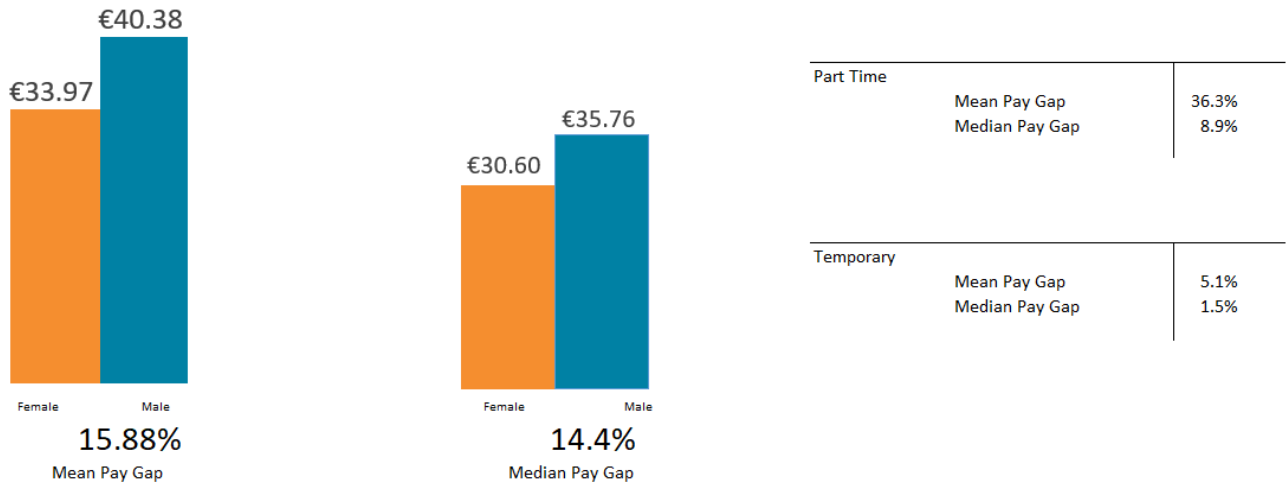


Figure 1: The Overall Gender Pay Gap (30 June 2024)

Table 5 details the overall gender pay gap data, disaggregated by staff category: Academic, PMS and Research staff.

Category	Mean GPG	Median GPG	Headcount
Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway	15.9%	14.4%	2,862
Academic	20.0%	5.3%	1,013
PMSS	11.9%	14.8%	1,066
Research	4.5%	3.0%	783

Table 5: The Gender Pay Gap (30 June 2024)

The data on male and female employees who are represented in each of the four pay quartiles (Figure 2) illustrates the higher proportion of female staff in the Lower Middle quartile (67.7%) relative to the overall proportion of women in the University (58.3%). Conversely, women are underrepresented in the Upper quartile (47.5%), and it is a combination of the representation of women in both of these pay quartiles which is driving the GPG.

This is broadly similar when compared to the data for previous years with a slight improvement evident in the 2024 data in terms of the percentage of women in the Upper pay quartile across the Institution (47.48%) and this is reflected in the reduced mean GPG from 18.4% in 2023 to 15.96% in 2024.

This improvement is partly attributable to the impact of new joiners (n=522 staff) in 2023/24 (Figure 3) which had the positive effect of reducing the GPG by 2.4%. We note however that the impact of leavers (n=376) had a negative impact of 0.8% which implies that women on higher salaries retired or left the University.

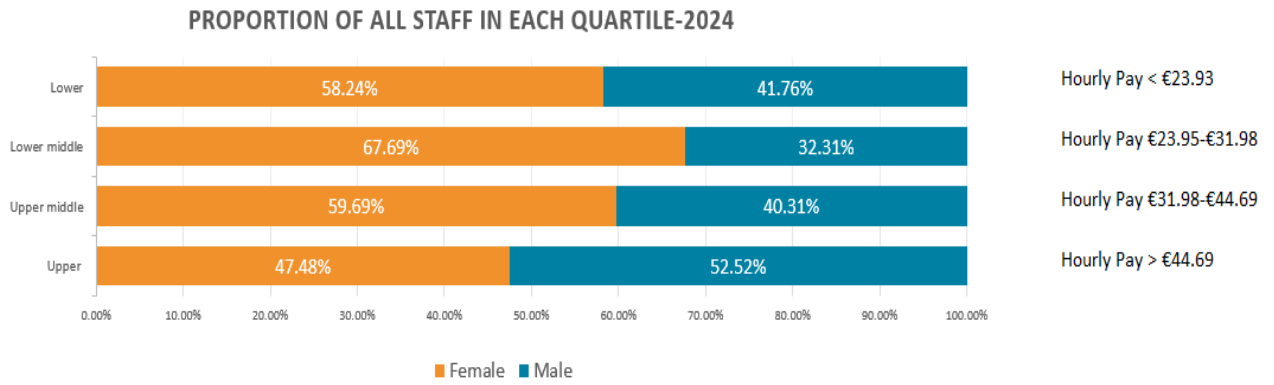
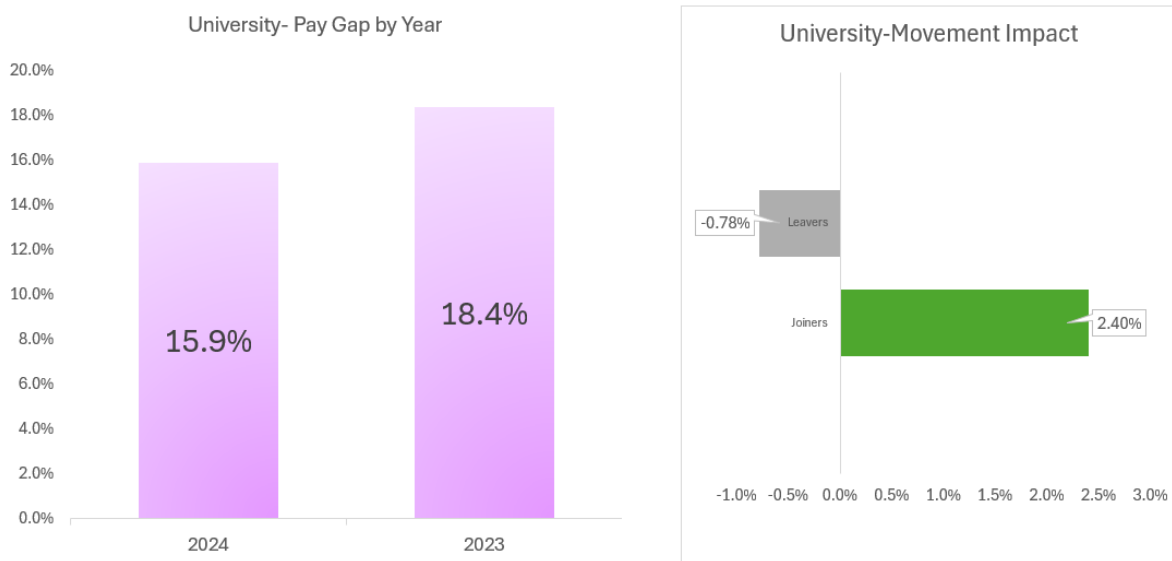


Figure 2: The percentages of male and female employees who fall into quartile pay bands (2024)



University					
Number of Joiners			Number of Leavers		
Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
278	244	522	201	175	376

Figure 3: Impact of Joiners and Leavers 2023/24

4 Commentary on Gender Pay Gap (GPG) by staff category

GPG data is examined in the context of academic, research, and professional, managerial and support staff (PMS) staff categories.

4.1 Academic Staff

As in previous years, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway’s mean GPG 2024 at 20% is most pronounced in the academic staff category which is broadly gender balanced with 516 women and 497 men. The GPG for this staff category is mainly driven by two factors: men are overrepresented in the highest paid grades (i.e. professorships and joint professor/consultant posts), and women are overrepresented in the entry level and lower paid grades (i.e., hourly contract staff, PTTA, LBB), with the median or “middle” academic man and woman being in the Lecturer Type B grade. Specifically, men account for 69.2% of earners in the Upper quartile, but only 38.6% in the Lower quartile (Figure 5).

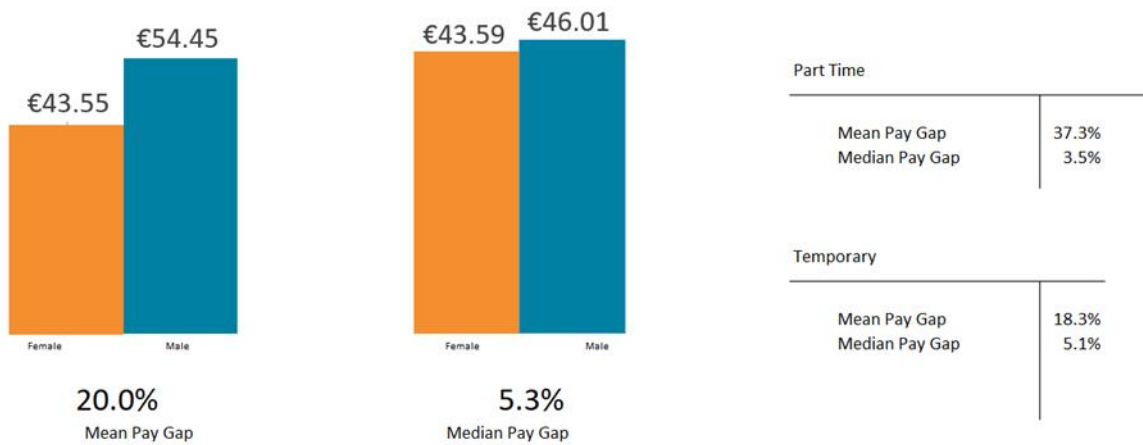


Figure 4: The Academic Pay Gap 2024

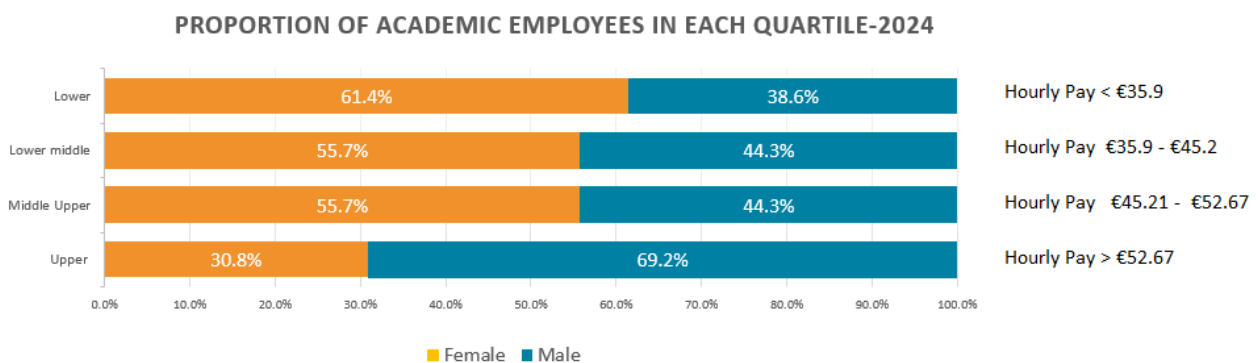


Figure 5: Proportion of Academic Staff in each quartile 2024

This position is compounded by the higher percentage of men employed in joint appointments with the HSE on academic and consultant contracts. These contracts are among the highest paid at Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway. In 2024, there were 6 women in such posts at the University, compared to 27 men, which creates a significant impact on the GPG. Figure 6 shows that this category of academic staff alone is increasing the University’s overall GPG by 3.68%, a finding consistent with previous analyses of the gender pay gap calculations and particular to Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway compared with other Irish

universities. The impact on the academic staff category is greater with the academic and consultant joint appointments adding 5% to the mean GPG for this category of staff (Figure 6).

Furthermore, the stark gender imbalance in these joint appointment positions is evident in the mean GPG for part-time staff overall which at 36.3% is substantially higher than the University overall. Although permanent to the University, these posts have part-time commitments to both the HSE and the University.

The median GPG for part-time staff (8.9%) is a more realistic representation of men and women in part-time posts across the University. This specific example highlights the importance of addressing this outlier as a means of reducing the mean gender pay gap.

Institution Impact

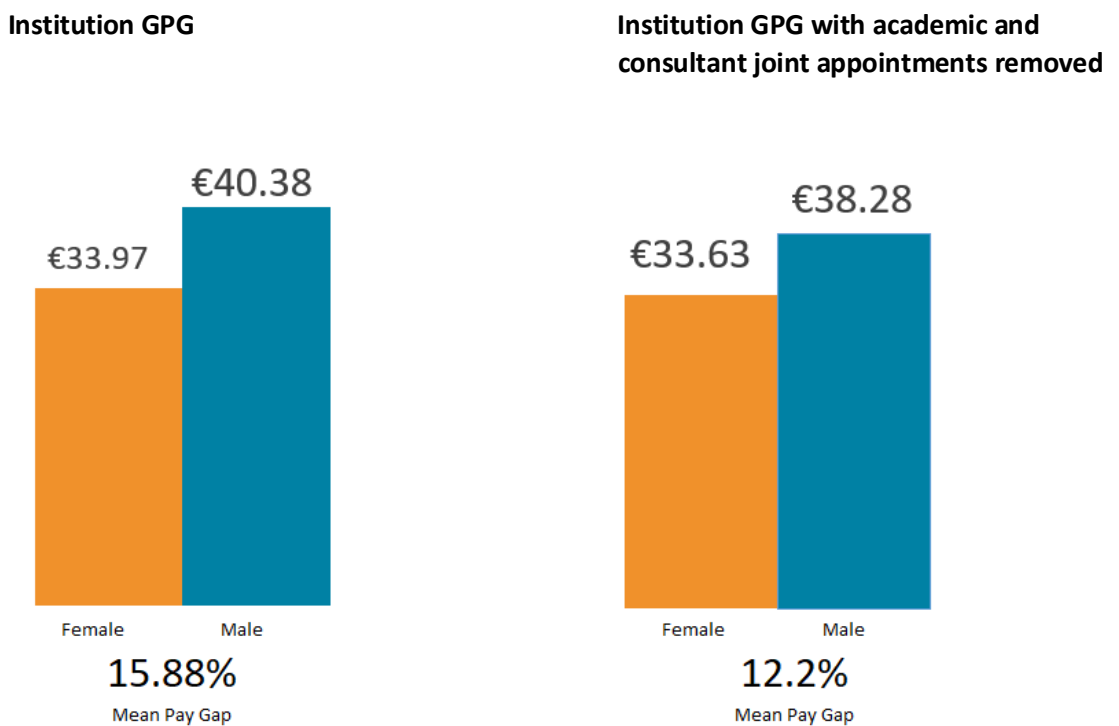
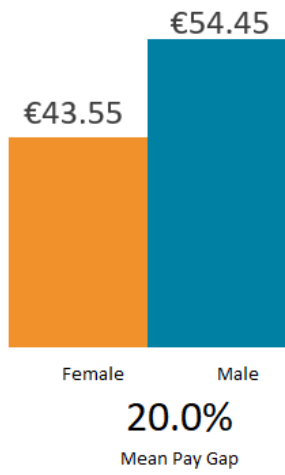


Figure 6: Comparative data – Overall GPG and GPG with academic and consultant joint appointments removed

Academic Impact

Original Academic Result



Academic Impact with Medical Consultants removed



Figure 7: Comparative data – Academic Impact GPG and with medical consultants removed

4.2 Research Staff

Women and men are evenly represented in the Research Staff category (51.7% women and 48.4% men) with some gendered differences evident in the distribution of men and women in the lower and upper pay quartiles (Figure 9). Most Researchers are employed at Postdoctoral/Associate Researcher grades, and this is reflected in the mean GPG of 4.5% and median GPG of 3%.

It is acknowledged that although this staff category does not contribute greatly to the Institution’s GPG, in accordance with the wider consideration of the equality profile of research staff, further consideration of the precarious nature and career trajectory of research staff is an important aspect of the University’s commitment to equality in a whole of institution context.

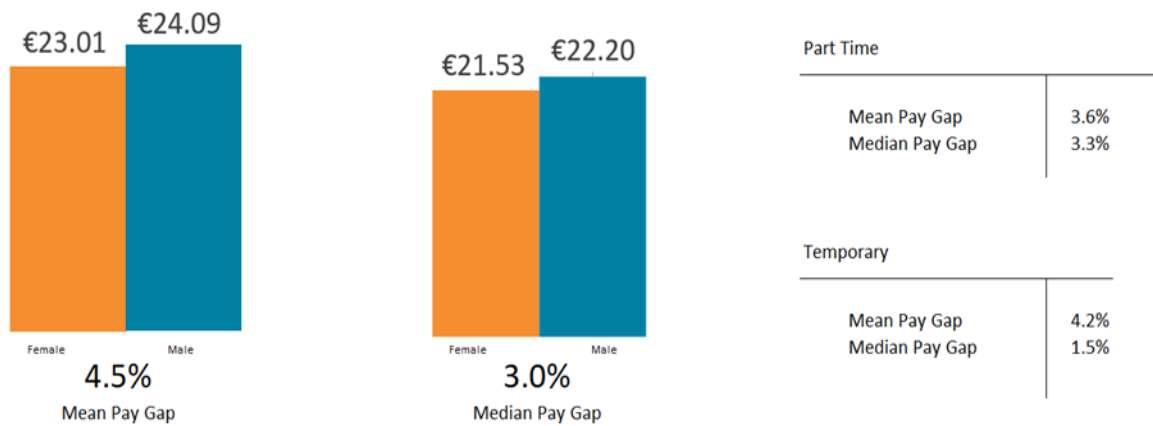


Figure 8: The Research Staff Pay Gap 2024

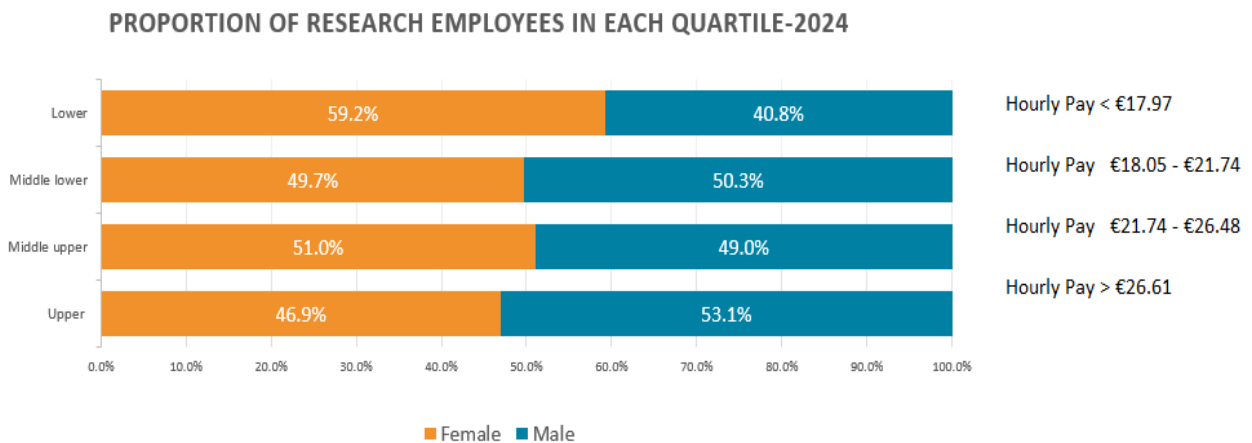


Figure 9: The Research Staff Quartiles 2024

4.3 Professional, Managerial and Support (PMS) Staff PMS

Professional, administrative and technical posts are treated as a single category in this report, denoted as Professional, Managerial and Support (PMS) staff. The 2024 GPG indicates that there is a 11.7% mean GPG in the PMS staff category, which is considerably lower than the mean GPG for academic staff (20%), and yet still higher than the national average of 9.6% in 2022 (CSO, 2023).

Women outnumber men in all pay quartiles for this staff category, with an overall composition of 747 women and 319 men. However, the GPG is largely driven by the fact that women account for just 54.31% of staff in the Upper pay quartile (Figure 11) despite their overall representation of 70.1% in this staff category thus highlighting a substantial disparity in terms of the overall gendered composition of the PMS staff category.

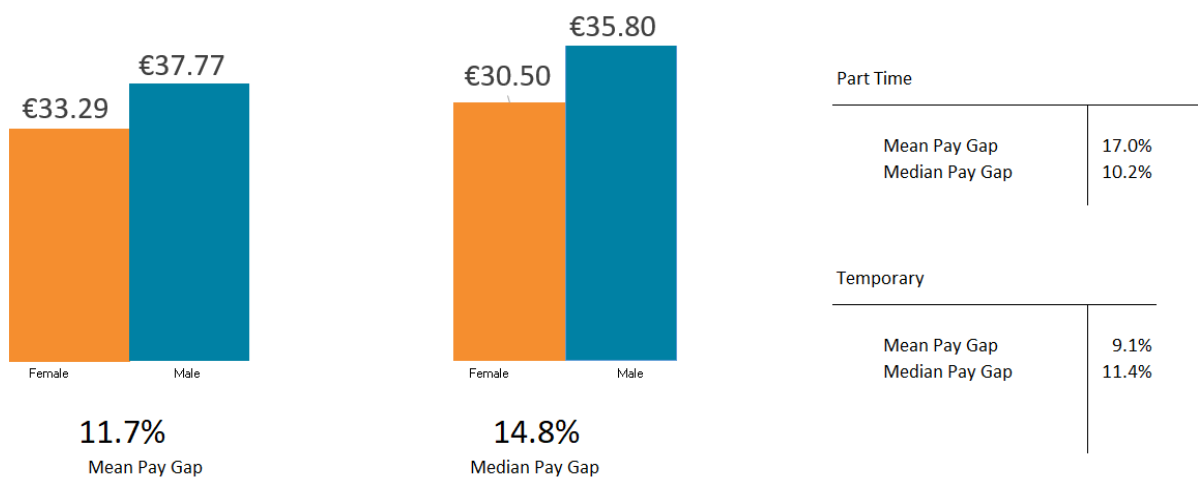


Figure 10: The Professional, Managerial and Support (PMS) Staff PMS2024 Pay Gap

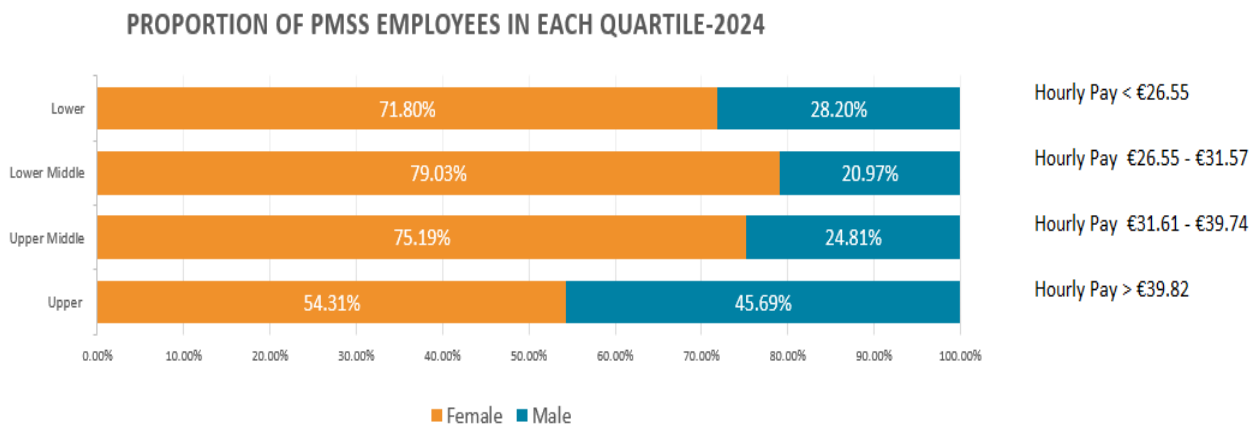


Figure 11: The Professional, Managerial and Support (PMS) Staff PMS2024 Quartiles

The median hourly rate for women and men in the PMS staff category are, respectively, €30.50 and €35.80, with a median GPG of 14.8%. The median pay rates are, approximately, 30% lower than the corresponding values for academic staff, viz €43.59 for women and €46.01 for men. Since there are many more women than men in PMS posts, these values contribute significantly to the institutional median GPG.

More precisely, the overall institutional median hourly pay rates are almost the same as that for PMS staff.

All of this points to the challenges regarding the upward mobility of PMS staff. Since there are far more women than men in this cohort, the impact is greater on women. Over the recent three-year period 2022-2024 there have been a total of 691 staff recruited in competitions to PMS posts of whom 444 were female (65%).

The University has also introduced a [Job Sizing Scheme](#) in 2022, with the objective of reviewing posts to decide if the role has changed over time and should be regraded, from Grade 2 up to and including Grade 5. To date 4 rounds of the job sizing scheme have been completed with 56 positions graded at a higher level. This scheme goes some way to increasing the number of opportunities for career progression for PMS staff, but further measures will likely be required.

One of the most salient discoveries during the analysis of the GPG in previous reports, illustrated that although the mean GPG at Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway is predominantly driven by academic staff grades, and, as this report indicates, the median GPG is driven by PMS staff grades.

In previous years, the University has been focusing on the promotions process for academic staff as a key action in addressing the GPG and while continuing to progress this objective attention also needs to be given to the PMS staff category. The gendered composition of the highest PMS earners needs to be examined in deeper detail, and initial findings suggest that interventions for female staff in this category are necessary to reduce the overall pay gap.

4.4 Trends Emerging in GPG Data

As noted earlier in Table 1, trends emerging in GPG data for Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway show a modest improvement of 4.1% in the mean GPG since 2018.

A slight improvement is also discernible in the 2024 data in terms of the percentage of women in the Upper pay quartile across the Institution (47.48%) and this is reflected in the reduced mean GPG from 18.4% in 2023 to 15.96% in 2024.

While it is encouraging to see an improvement in 2024, it is noted that the distribution of men and women in the pay quartiles was relatively static in previous years, averaging at 44% women in the Upper quartile and up to 60% female in the Lower quartile.

This overall picture is critical in illustrating the disparities and persistent gaps in terms of the range of hourly pay across the institution. Despite implementing a wide range of measures to support gender equality over the past number of years, it has been difficult to shift the GPG significantly. Nonetheless, the trajectory is moving in the right direction, particularly in terms of the academic career pipeline for women, leading to increased numbers of female staff at Senior Lecturer and Professor level within the University. The impact of this can be seen in small incremental improvements in the percentage of women in the academic Upper pay quartile over the years from 26.2% in 2019 to 30.8% in 2024

4.5 Comparative Insights

Comparative studies show that Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's mean GPG in 2024 (15.9%) is higher than that of all other Irish University Association (IUA) member institutions in 2023; the average of which was 12.11% mean GPG whereas Galway's median GPG (14.4%) was broadly similar to the average median GPG (14.63%).

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's mean GPG is also higher than the national mean GPG of 9.6% (CSO, 2022), and that of EU Member States for the economy as a whole (12.7%) albeit with significant variation of 22.0 percentage points ranging from -0.7 % in Luxembourg to 21.3 % in Estonia (Eurostat 2022).

It is closer to the mean GPG in higher education in the UK in 2020/21 at 14.8% ([Advance HE, THE paper, 2022](#)).

5 Key Gender Equality Issues and Institutional Responses to Date

As noted at the outset of this report, the gathering and analysis of GPG data has been an integral aspect of the institutional commitment to addressing systemic gender inequality in the University. Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway has had a challenging history on gender equality matters in relation to a landmark case of gender discrimination in academic career progression in 2014. While we continue to have gender inequality issues, particularly in terms of a sustainable population of women in senior academic and academic leadership positions in the University, our University Management Team sought to tackle our gender equality matters head-on. This was initially achieved through the establishment of a Gender Equality Task Force, in February 2015, chaired by Prof Jane Grimson, former Vice-Provost, Trinity College Dublin. The remit of this Task Force was to examine Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's policies and practices and make recommendations to advance gender equality across the institution. The establishment of the Gender Equality Task Force differentiates Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway from other higher education institutions, demonstrating a serious engagement and willingness to lead in addressing the gendered nature of inequality. This Task Force was a precursor to the national emphasis on gender equality in higher education in Ireland, whereby an Expert Group on Gender Equality was created in 2016 and a National Gender Equality Task Force was established to address the entire higher education sector in 2017.

Members of Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway 2016's Gender Equality Task Force, under the

leadership of Prof Grimson, carried out an in-depth literature review, and engaged in extensive staff consultation, to develop an evidence-based set of recommendations to enable the achievement of gender equality in the institution. The Report is available to review in full [here](#). The impact of implementing the recommendations from the Report of the Task Force (May 2016), and subsequent gender equality action plans (GEAP 2 and GEAP 3) has had a demonstrable impact on progressing gender equality in our university community.

During the period 2016-2024 we have seen a lot of reactive responses in light of the multiplicity of challenges, but also significant progress and real systemic change in tandem with a proactive approach which includes establishment of our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) infrastructure, programmes of work, and the embedding of EDI governance structures across the University.

Demonstrable impact is apparent across the University in multiple measures as evidenced in relation to representation and institutional governance for EDI; increase in senior female academic staff; Gender Equality Action Plans and Athena Swan actions and interventions; and leadership initiatives.

5.1 Governance Structure

We have introduced a clear governance structure for EDI across the University, from our schools and units, through our college and support services directorate structure, to UMT, the Governing Authority and its sub-committees (Figure 12).

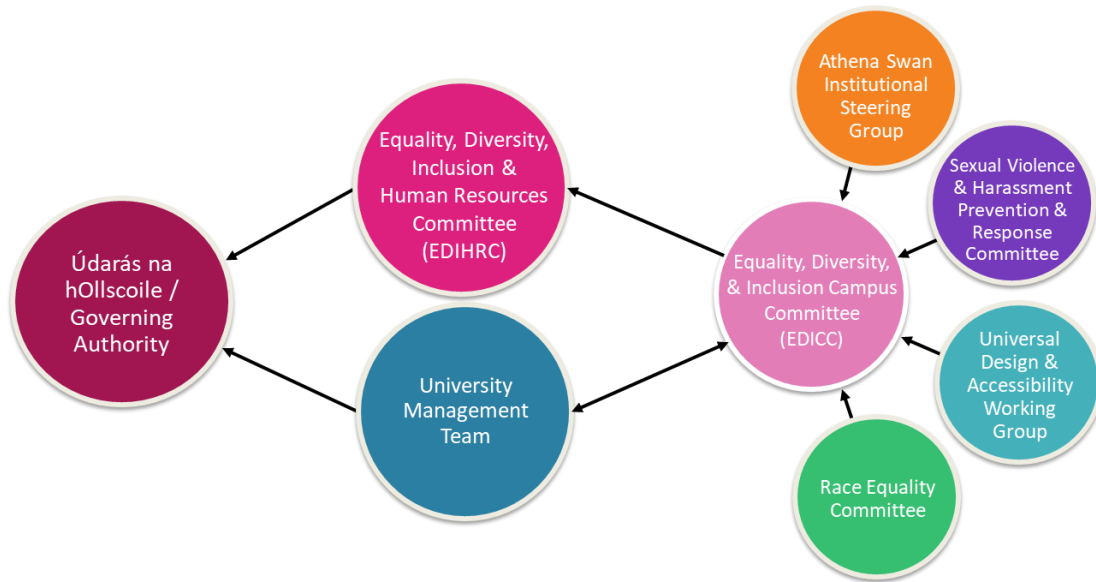


Figure 12: Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway EDI Governance Structure

5.2 Gender Equality Action Plans (GEAP)

The University's [Gender Equality Action Plans](#) (GEAP) provide a structured, strategic framework for advancing the gender equality agenda across the institution. These plans outline specific goals, actions, and measurable outcomes aimed at addressing gender disparities in various areas, including recruitment, retention, career progression, leadership representation, and campus culture. Through the GEAP, the University sets clear priorities for promoting gender equality, while ensuring that efforts are coordinated, monitored, and aligned with broader institutional values and objectives. The GEAP also serves as a critical tool for fostering a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable environment for all members of the University community, ensuring that gender considerations are embedded in policies, practices, and cultural norms. By establishing a clear, actionable roadmap, the GEAP helps to drive meaningful change and provides accountability for sustained progress in advancing gender equality within the University. We are now completing the third iteration, GEAP 3, with a view of creating our next GEAP in 2024 spanning the next five years.

Through implementation of our GEAPs, we now have processes, practices and mechanisms to ensure frequent monitoring and awareness of gender equality in our key decision-making processes. For example;

- EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) of new and revised policies
- Recruitment monitoring
- Reform of academic promotions processes at both Senior Lecturer and Professorial levels

It is established policy that all key decision-making committees across the University comprise a minimum of 40% men and women and the gender profile of committees is audited on an annual basis. At a

college/school level, committee membership is expected to reflect the gender profile of the college/unit at a minimum.

We are now seeing the visible impact of these measures in the gender composition of our management teams, committees and working groups across Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway, including an increasing number of women in senior leadership roles such as Head of School and Units, Executive Deans roles and the University Management Team.

5.3 Progress Achieved: Increase in Senior Female Academic Staff

All of our Gender Equality Action Plans (GEAPs) have included focused measures to increase the number of female academic staff at every level in the University. Our GPG reports have consistently found the underrepresentation of women in senior academic positions to be one of the major drivers of our GPG. In response, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway has put concrete measures in place to address this gap including a promotions project to support promotion of women to Senior Lecturer and Personal Professor, careful monitoring of applicant pools and shortlists for all posts, and a revised academic promotions scheme providing bi-annual opportunities to apply for promotions to Senior Lecturer (SL) and Professor grades, as was committed to in our 2017 Athena Swan Action Plan. Promotions and recruitment campaigns since 2016 have improved the proportion of women at SL grade from 33% to 48% and at the Personal Professor grade from 16% to 33% (2024). Overall, women currently represent 28% of the full Professoriate. The overall data for the promotions rounds to date demonstrate that this is impactful in enabling career progression for female academic staff. Since the implementation of the revised promotions process in 2019, women have been proportionately more successful than men in applying for academic promotion. It is understood from the analysis of the GPG that this is one area which will make a material difference to the current pay gap, however while the number of females in the category is improving, it will take time for individuals to progress along the incremental scales in order to effect a reduction in the GPG.

5.4 Progress Achieved: Initiatives Introduced Through GEAP Actions

As a result of our focus on gender equality we have recognised the need to develop and implement a suite of new policies to enable equality and inclusiveness. The section below outlines some of the most relevant initiatives to date.

- **Meetings During Core Hours policy** was introduced in September 2016 to ensure that the maximum number of people can attend these meetings, particularly those with parental responsibilities, ensuring widespread dissemination of critical information and avoiding unintended exclusion of some staff. This policy was updated to include seminars and workshops and encourages a practice of varying times of meetings and events in order to avoid sustained exclusion.
- **Returner Grants for Research Active Academic Staff** of up to €10,000 were introduced to support all academic grades to re-engage with their research upon returning from long-term leave. This non-competitive grant is available on an ongoing basis all year round – 49 grants have been awarded to date.
- **Mid-Career Capacity Building grants** of up to €5,000 are available for academic staff who took an extended period of leave connected with caring to help mitigate the impact of extended leave on research activities. In 2020/21, eligibility was extended to Postdoctoral Researchers and Research Fellows. This is a competitive grant, and 58 grants have been awarded to date. In 2023, this grant

has a slightly expanded criteria to allow for staff members that have experienced critical illness or other forms of long-term leave to apply.

- **A Research Consolidation grant** was developed as phase 2 of the Promotions Project (the first phase being career development sessions with SL academics). This grant of €3,000 is for female SLs to consolidate research development and assist them in making a strong application for promotion to Professor. 26 grants have been awarded to date.
- **Enhanced Maternity Leave cover** was introduced in September 2016. The EDI office has worked in collaboration with the HR Director to propose a strengthening of the current model with increased cover for academic staff on maternity leave to be approved in 2024.
- **Actions to Support Those on Maternity Leave:** Since 2017, mothers returning from maternity leave are invited to attend a dedicated '**Maternity Matters: Return to Work**' workshop, offered bi-annually, with 100% positive feedback on their value.
- **Academic Workload Allocation Guidelines initially** introduced in September 2018. The policy was revised and approved in 2023. **Performance for Growth** was approved in 2023. This is an institutionally approved process for employee review and development which was implemented for all employees commencing in the 2023/24 academic year.

5.5 Progress Achieved: Training Provided Through GEAP Actions

- **Unconscious Bias Training:** Unconscious Bias and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is provided to all interview panels; Unit, School and College and University executive teams; available to all staff including postdoctoral staff; and all postgraduate research students and teacher education students.
- **Aurora Women's Leadership Development Programme:** 172 women supported on this programme – across academic, professional services and research staff categories.
- **Leadership Development Programme:** A new Leadership Development Programme was piloted in March 2024 through a collaborative partnership between the Human Resources' Learning and Development Office and the Office of the Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (OVPEDI), and will be formally launched in September 2024.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion values are integrated into the programme, which forms part of the OVPEDI's broader mandate to embed EDI across all institutional processes, procedures, and the University's daily operations. The Leadership Programme is designed to support middle to senior level staff, such as Heads of School, Heads of Discipline, Heads of Unit, Senior Managers (Grade 5 upwards), Senior Technical Officers, Senior Researchers and Principal Investigators, to effectively lead their teams, schools, departments and projects with respect, efficiency and effectiveness. A total of 16 participated on the programme, with places distributed across colleges, central units, and senior research positions.

5.6 Athena Swan

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's engagement with the Athena Swan Charter framework has resulted in the implementation of focused action plans informed by extensive consultation with staff and students, and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

The University holds a Bronze institutional award and is currently preparing a Silver award application for submission in Q2 2025. Additionally, the University also has 11 Bronze departmental awards and 2 Silver

departmental awards: School of Engineering and School of Business & Economics.

Established in September 2023, the OVPEDI now offers annual funding of €3,000 for Schools and Units to support Athena Swan activity. This initiative is financed under the University’s 10% Strategic Fund. The scheme aims to provide financial assistance to support Athena Swan applications, action implementation and award renewals. In addition, it specifically addresses the University’s strategic objectives of attaining an institutional Athena Swan Silver Award and increasing the number of schools with awards by 2025.

The scheme is part of University’s efforts to build the operational capability and key supports required to mainstream and embed gender equality in a sustainable and efficient manner, and support, recognise and resource Athena Swan work in a centralised, systematic way. In addition, it will help to ensure that individual burdens and common actions are alleviated through enhancing operational capacity from application to implementation and renewal.

Bronze Award Holder – University of Galway	Silver Awards
School of Medicine	School of Business & Economics School of Engineering
School of Nursing and Midwifery	
School of Health Sciences	
School of Psychology	
School of Mathematics, Statistics, and Applied Mathematics	
School of Natural Sciences	
School of Biological and Chemical Sciences	
School of Computer Science and Data Science Institute (Joint Application)	
School of Law	
Shannon College of Hotel Management	

Table 6: Ollscoil na Gaillimhe – University of Galway’s Athena Swan Awards

6 Proposed Actions

In line with Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway's Strategy 2020-2025, EDI Strategy 2020-2025 and Gender Equality Action Plan 3 2021-2024 ([GEAP3 Progress 2022](#)), which commits to substantially reducing the GPG, concrete measures have been put in place to address the pay gap. The University will continue to implement the GEAP 3 which identifies actions, timelines and responsibilities pertaining to organisational culture and work-life balance; gender balance in leadership; equal opportunities in recruitment and career progression; gender in research and teaching; measures against gender-based violence; and gender equality and intersectionality. In terms of positive action measures, a new policy detailing a range of activities and interventions to address the GPG was approved by UMT in 2024. Workforce planning will identify where posts will arise due to retirement and growth, and recruitment plans should include explicit actions to reduce the GPG. More emphasis is required to increase opportunities and career development for PMS staff, as this will have the greatest potential to improve the median GPG. Targeted interventions in terms of job sizing are also important and consideration should be given to including higher level grades in this process. Positive action in relation to recruitment, promotion and career progression is also under consideration to address areas of underrepresentation within the University.

7 Conclusion

As we progress to 2025, we welcome the reduction in the 2024 GPG. The positive impact of existing measures (promotion, recruitment, career development) is evident in the increase of the proportion of women in senior academic grades and in its turn slowly reducing the GPG. It is acknowledged that this is a long-term process, and the strategic objective of significantly reducing the pay gap must remain a constant focus. In that respect, the adoption of targeted measures to achieve the desired outcome will be implemented in accordance with the Positive Action policy.

Recent research on the gender pay gap in the UK higher education sector recognises that the 'causes of gender pay disparities are complex and multi-layered, but analysis of them in the higher education sector, and more generally, is theoretically and empirically incomplete' (Woodhams, Trojanowski and Wilkinson, 2022:544). Notwithstanding both the complexity and limitations of theoretical and empirical causality, the research to date at Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway illustrates there are many factors that contribute to the gender pay gap. Notably, the concentration of female staff within the two lower quartiles provides specific cause for concern. Additionally, the disproportionate impact of the pay of particular staff cohorts within the academic staff category, and the imbalance in representation across the quartiles, requires further deliberation and a strategic response.