

A graphic logo for ATU Donegal, featuring a light blue triangle with a dark blue circle inside, and a series of curved lines below it, all set against a dark teal background.

Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

ATU Donegal
Access to Sport and Physical Activity Policy
October 2021

Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Donegal

Access to Sport and Physical Activity Policy

Revision

Date of this revision	15/10/21
Date of next review	15/10/23
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Summary of changes	New ATU Donegal Access to Sport & Physical Activity Policy

Consultation

Dates	Aug-Oct 2021
Parties in consultation	Head of Sport, ATU Donegal Sport Centre Manager, ATU Donegal Student Services Manager ATU Donegal Access Office ATU Donegal Students Union Sport Ireland - Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Policy Document

Approval

Version	1
Approved by	Head of Sport, ATU Donegal. Sport Centre Manager, ATU Donegal. Student Services Manager, ATU Donegal.
Date	15/10/21

Document Location

Website	Sport Centre, ATU Donegal
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1. Introduction

A core value of ATU Sport is sport for all, the promotion of inclusion and participation for everyone, without exclusion. This includes students, staff, the wider community and under-represented groups within and outside the university. This core value is reflected in the Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award, awarded to ATU Donegal in 2022, in recognition of its work in advancing gender equality in higher education and in promoting diversity and inclusion for staff and students. Adopting the Athena SWAN charter commits the university to removing barriers that contribute to under-representation. ATU Sport seeks to embed these principles in all its activities together with the following principles:

- Offer appropriate opportunities for participation, social or active, and improvement to all.
- Retain a focus on addressing social, disability, gender, ethnic and age gradients in sport and recreation.
- Centre the needs and rights of those at risk of marginalisation.
- Foster a sense of belonging by offering and promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Ensuring all staff are mobilised to become involved in the enactment and ethos of diversity and inclusion.

2. Policy Context

The core value of inclusion permeates The National Sports Policy 2018-2027, a value which is the guiding principle of Sport Ireland's Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Policy, 2021. A Sport Ireland research report (2021) undertaken to explore the issues relating to diversity and inclusion in sport identified and explored barriers, gaps and challenges to participation in sport and physical activity for people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities including Irish Travellers and the LGBTI+ community. Results confirmed that gaps persist among those from identified diverse backgrounds with active participation in sport similar or lower than the rest of the population. People with disabilities show significantly lower levels of active versus social participation. The report concludes that lower levels of participation are not through choice but are a legacy of years of a long-standing status quo that is contrary to contemporary society.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is threefold:

- a) To commit to and advance inclusion, equality, diversity and access in sport and physical activity at ATU.
- b) To drive a cultural change to foster inclusion, progressively and continuously, so it becomes the norm.
- c) To mobilise staff, students and others to enact an ethos of diversity and inclusion.

4. Definitions

Diversity	The different characteristics of people who comprise our community. It includes an understanding and acceptance of the fact that people have unique individual characteristics and qualities.
Inclusion	Valuing people's differences. It is proactive behaviours, actions and options to ensure people feel welcomed, respected, that they belong and have a voice that is heard.
Participation	All aspects of engagement in sport or physical activity including active or social participation, club membership, volunteering, attending sports events, supportive family members, governance of sports bodies.
Under-represented Groups	LGBTI+, people with disability, ethnic minority, direct provision, gender groupings - specifically females - and certain age groups.

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All units of Sport in ATU including sports staff and sports management, the sports courses academic unit, all students, all sport centre members, professional, technical and other service units.
- All university employees.
- All officers of the Student Union.
- All external parties who may operate within or visit an ATU campus.

6. External Reference Documents

The principle regulatory and legislative documents informing this policy include:

- Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Policy Document, Sport Ireland, 2021.
- National Sports Policy 2018-2027
- Sports Action Plan, Sport Ireland, 2021-2023
- National Physical Activity Plan, 2016 (updated in 2022)
- Irish Sports Monitor 2021
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2018
- The 20x20 Women in Sport Campaign, 2019-2020.

7. Barriers and Challenges

ATU Sport recognises that barriers to sport and physical activity, beyond the general barriers of gender, age group and socioeconomics, are specific with varying import per under-represented groups. It is aimed not only to recognise these barriers but minimise or remove them, with consideration to their specificity, when attracting groups to the sport centre, in planning programmes of activity or in general use.

Table 1. Barriers and challenges to participation, per group, in order of effect below.

LGBTI+	Disability	Ethnic Minority
1. Anxiety or fear of experiencing homophobia, prejudice, discrimination, bullying and exclusion	1. Lack of resources, capacity and skills	1. Anxiety or fear of discrimination, racism and exclusion.
2. Attitudinal barriers, not feeling welcomed or included	2. Accessibility of facilities and equipment	2. Lack of representation and role models
3. Lack of representation and models	3. Attitudinal barriers, not feeling welcome or included	3. Attitudinal barriers, not feeling welcome or included
4. Awareness and access to clubs and facilities	4. Lack of choice	4. Availability and accessibility of facilities, clubs and opportunities
5. Preference for non-competitive individual sport due to low self-esteem or perceived lack of ability	5. Lack of confidence, self-esteem, perceived lack of ability, fear of being judged, feeling embarrassed and being a burden	

Diversity and Inclusion in Sport, Sport Ireland (2021)

7.1 Female participation

In addition to the above, ATU Sport recognises that adult females of all ages are a low usage group with factors such as overcrowding, male dominated weights area, self-consciousness and embarrassment being cited as barriers to participation.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members of ATU Sport have responsibility in respect of adherence to this policy and encouraging its enactment throughout members of the university community. It is expected that all staff members of ATU Sport will mobilise to enact inclusion and access.

9. Policy

ATU Sport welcomes all users to take part in sport and physical activity, with a special focus on underrepresented groups. Facility use and participation, for all, is determined by availability outside of academic needs, ATU club use and student use. Discrimination or bias, conscious or unconscious, is not tolerated nor does it play a part in determining access to facilities.

9.1 Policy Pillars

ATU Sport identifies with Sport Ireland's five key policy pillars, and has adapted them from five to six, which incorporates current gaps and future opportunities for diversity and inclusion in sport.

Change / Embrace, Communication, Access/Reach, Relationships, Leadership, Activity and Facilities.

Pillar	Activity
1.Change / Embrace	<p>The provision of staff development and training for all academic and professional, management and support services staff which supports equality, diversity and inclusion, including leadership development.</p> <p>ATU Sport will seek out staff training and awareness on inclusion, diversity and racism with all staff to attend (most recent training, ATU Donegal, June & Sept 2023).</p> <p>Driven by the Sports Centre manager but with staff involvement and uptake.</p> <p>Liaise with the Student’s Union (SU) to share and plan for provision and support of under-represented groups.</p> <p>Resources and support are available or are forthcoming for both staff and students within ATU structures and are/will be availed of.</p>
2. Communication	<p>Inclusion and representation in ATU Sport and physical activity is, and will continue to be, visible via various promotional material. The marketing and promotion of activities, opportunities and facilities for all, will be inclusive, photographs and graphics representative with appropriate wording.</p> <p>Marketing to diverse target groups will be in a welcoming and inclusive manner, as above.</p> <p>The import and effect of appropriate verbal communication between staff and users is understood and will be encouraged and enacted.</p>
3. Access / Reach	<p>Ensuring facilities, where possible, are dual use / accessible for all. ATU Donegal gym equipment has 60% dual use equipment and will continue to procure such equipment with accessibility being the default starting point.</p> <p>The practice of reaching out to non-university target groups such as Travellers Groups, Direct Provision Groups, Youth Reach, National Learning groups will continue with rapport built upon. Reaching out and inviting special needs schools and female secondary schools to use facilities for organised programmes will continue.</p> <p>Within the university, targeting, raising awareness and welcoming minority or low usage groups within the university such as females, (e.g. continuance of the women’s gym hour), LGBTI+, ethnic minorities, those with a disability or other. Assistance in reaching these groups will be in conjunction with the Access Office and Student’s Union (SU) when appropriate or required.</p> <p>Liaison with the SU to support diverse activity and events will continue.</p> <p>Inclusion will be a focus when planning programmes and activity, plus suitability for all abilities.</p> <p>ATU competitive sport welcomes diversity.</p>

	Cost will remain lower than market value for disadvantaged or underrepresented groups with special agreements on pricing for certain groups.
4. Relationships	Good relationships between management, staff and users are nurtured within and without the university to foster belonging, friendliness and respect for all users and groups thereby encouraging continued use.
5. Leadership	<p>A culture of inclusion is the aimed for ethos in ATU Sport. This ethos is nurtured by management and staff in line with the Athena SWAN principles. Staff involvement and mobilisation in planned activity and provision is encouraged to generate 'ownership' and thereby help with enactment.</p> <p>ATU Sport will undertake monitoring, evaluation and research of its users, its activity provision and barriers to participation.</p>
6. Activity, Equipment and Facilities	<p>Activity, planned or casual, will be inclusive and accessible to all. Equipment provision is and will be dual-use where possible with, at minimum, 60% provision in gym equipment and 40% in other. Accessible equipment will be the default starting point when procuring equipment.</p> <p>See points 12, 13 and 14 as follow.</p>

10. Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Objectives	Desired Outcomes
1. ATU Sport will continue to lead, progressively, in removing barriers that contribute to underrepresentation.	Sport and physical activity become more welcoming and inclusive offering greater opportunities for participation, social or active, to all ATU Sport users and potential users.
2. ATU Sport will mobilise to improve diversity and inclusion, within and outside ATU, by stimulating a greater awareness via promotional methods, including representational visuals and positive verbal communications.	An increase in awareness and confidence, via subtle representation, to engage people from underrepresented groups.
3. ATU Sport will plan and provide a targeted and varied activity programme per semester for specific underrepresented groups/individuals.	To achieve a significant decrease in the sport gradients by ethnicity, disability, age and gender.

11. Users and User Groups

11.1 The internal ATU Sport users are comprised of:

- ATU Donegal students. Within this group 10% are registered with a disability.
- ATU Donegal staff
- ATU Donegal Sports clubs and societies
- ATU Donegal sport centre members.
- ATU Donegal Access Office.
- Co-Lab clients

11.2 Low Usage User Groups Within and Outside the University

The under-represented groups at ATU include LGBTI+, people with disability, ethnic minorities, females, travellers, those in direct provision and of refugee status.

Planned programming is in place for the above groups / individuals, such as the weekly women's only hours in the gym x 2 and summer activity for the direct provision group. Reach will continue to these low usage groups by verbal, print and social media communication, in conjunction with the Access Office, the Student's Union, Local Sports Partnerships or directly with the group or individuals.

11.3 External Group Usage.

Groups who currently use the sports facilities, on more than one occasion per semester or/and in the summer months, are listed below. ATU Sport is committed to progressive relationships with these and other underrepresented groups.

Travellers Project (TP)

Direct Provision Group (DPG)

Donegal Youth Service (DYS)

National Learning Network (NLN)

Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs)

Donegal Local Development Companies (DLDC)

The Indian Community badminton group

Primary and secondary school groups, including special needs schools.

Local basketball clubs

Local soccer clubs

Local GAA club (minors)

Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA)

12. Activity

Planned activity is offered based on users' needs and industry trends.

12.1 An Active Campus Recreational Programme is offered to all students and staff. Varied unconventional, non-competitive activity tasters are offered and continued if there is demand.

12.2 Women's hour in gym, twice weekly during semesters 1& 2. Females only, all abilities.

12.3 ADHD / AuDHD Fitness Group. Twice weekly small group tailored exercise sessions.

12.4 Personal customised training.

12.5 A competitive sports programme for clubs.

12.6 Tailored activity sessions for external groups TP, DPG, YR, NLN.

12.7 Non-competitive Easter and Summer Camps for children of all abilities aged 5-13.

12.8 Schools 'Day Out' annual June programme. For all abilities.

13. Facilities

13.1 Gym facilities, where possible, are dual use / accessible for all.

ATU Donegal gym equipment has 60% dual use equipment. This includes moveable seats on the fixed weight equipment to allow for wheelchair use, ramps where feasible, back supported seats and belts on rowers and bike, bright handles, levers, foot holds and consoles on various equipment. Accessible equipment will be pursued in future procurement.

An accessible lift is provided between floors.

13.2 Sports Hall Equipment

Where possible sports hall equipment is accessible and dual-use. Where possible, accessible equipment will be sought in future procurement with an aim of 40% of total equipment.

Examples of accessible hall equipment include adjustable basketball posts, volleyball and badminton posts and bright colours on indoor goal posts.

13.3 Access to the Sports building, the hall, gym, pitch and changing rooms is barrier free.

14. Future Facility Development

Accessibility and dual use facilities will be planned for and incorporated in the design of future sports developments at ATU.