University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath

BREAKING BOUNDARIES
STRATEGY TO 2030

Setting the Scene – EDI at Universities

Colin Scott
University College Dublin

EDI at Universities - Outline

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1. EDI Foundations
2. Regulatory/Legal Context
3. EDI Experience in Universities
4. Actions and Action Plans re Gender inequality
5. EDI Barriers in Doctoral Education
6. EDI and Doctoral Education

EDI Foundations - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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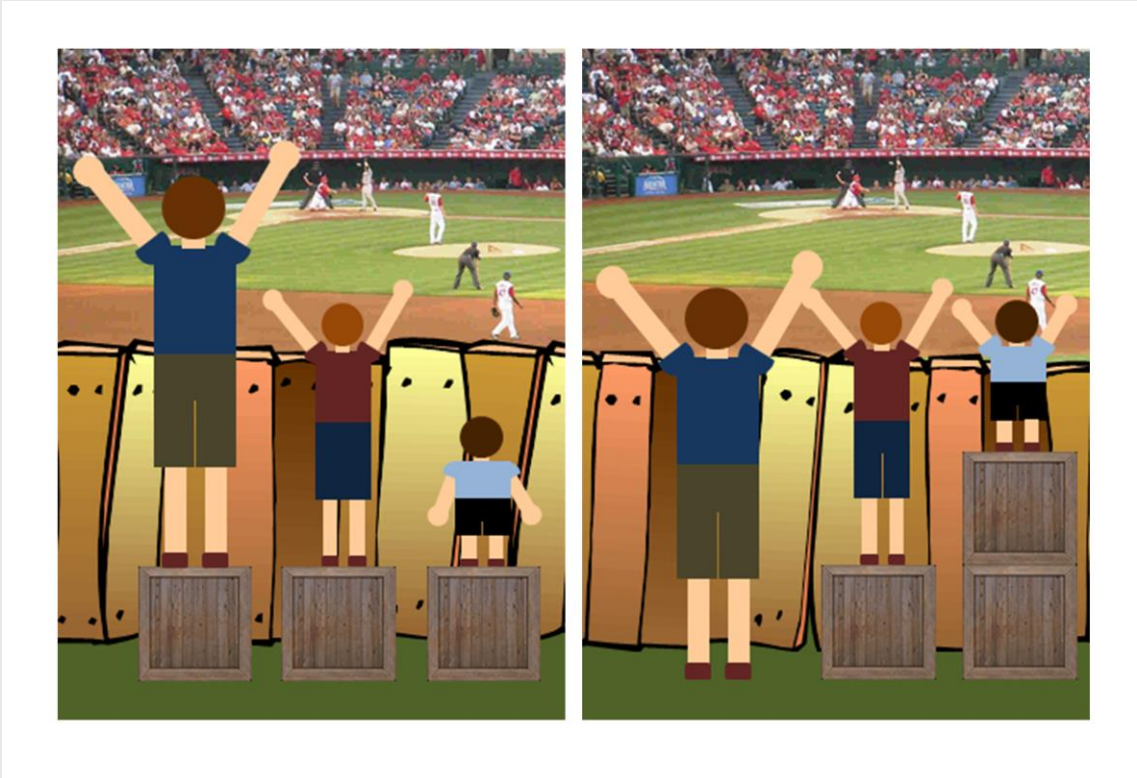
A. Social Justice and Business Cases for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

B. Equality v Equity



Source: Craig Froehle, https://medium.com/@CRA1G/the-evolution-of-an-accidental-meme-ddc4e139e0e4

C. “Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.” (Vernā Myers)

Regulatory/Legal Context

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EU Law

EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000)

Article 21 Non-discrimination

- Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language,
  religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

International Soft Law

eg UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015) – SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)

EU Transparency Measures

Pay Transparency Directive (2023)

Other initiatives

Athena Swan Charter (Advance HE – UK, Ireland, SAGE – Australia)

EU – Mandatory Gender Equality Plans as precondition to participation in Horizon Europe Research Funding Application

EDI Experience in Universities

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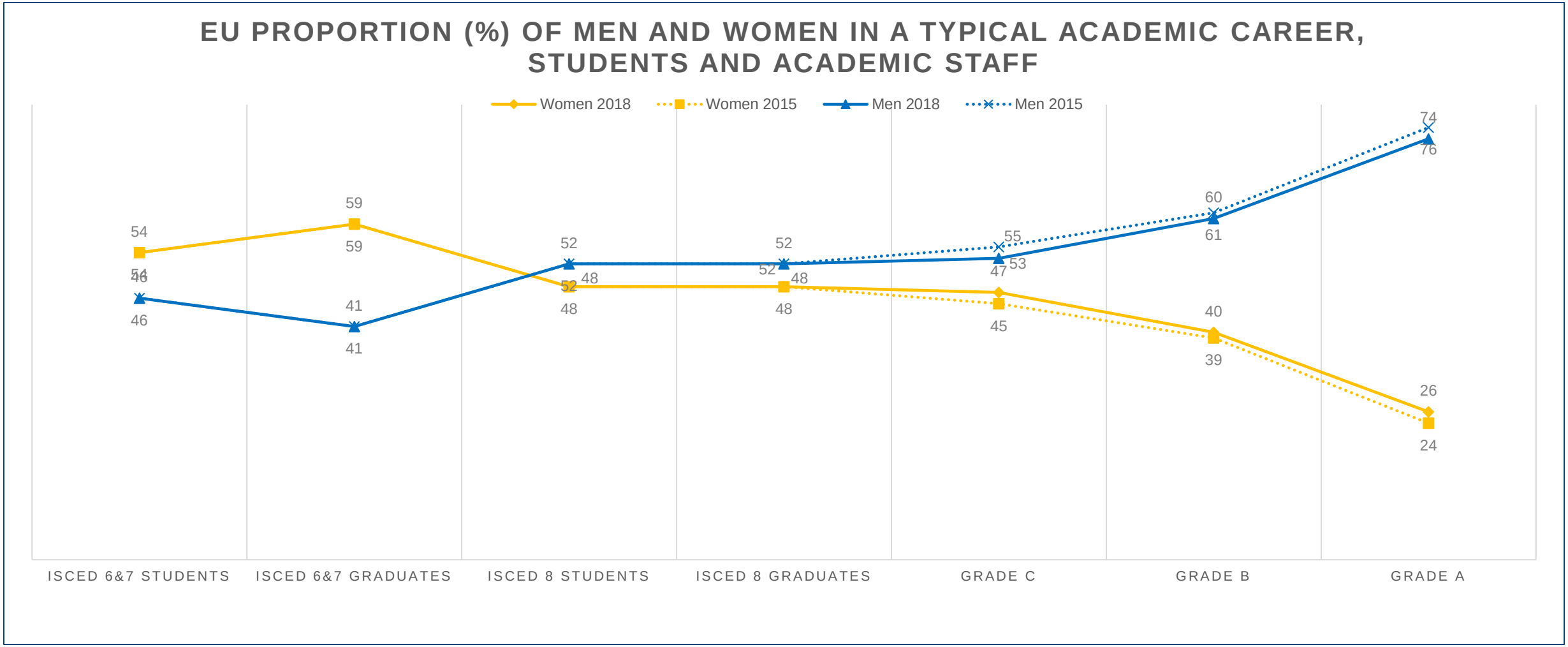
I. Recognition of inequalities by reference to gender, and actions, in particular
II. Recognition of, and actions on, other equality grounds more mixed
III. Self-Assessment and Actions to Change Culture on EDI



Data source: Women in Science database, DG Research and Innovation - T1_questionnaires , Education Statistics (online data codes: educ_uoe_enrt03, educ_uoe_grad02)
Bachelor's and Master's or equivalent level (ISCED levels 6 & 7) followed by Doctoral level or equivalent (ISCED level 8).
ISCED 6 – Bachelor's or equivalent level.
ISCED 7 – Master's or equivalent level.
ISCED 8 – Doctoral or equivalent level.
Grade C: The first grade/post into which a newly qualified PhD (ISCED 8) graduate would normally be recruited within the institutional or corporate system.
Grade B: All researchers working in positions that are not as senior as the top position (A) but definitely more senior than the newly qualified PhD holders (C) (i.e. below A and abo
Grade A: The single highest grade / post at which research is normally conducted within the institutional or corporate system

Actions and Action Plans for Gender Equality I

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Plans under **Horizon Europe**

1. Public document
2. Dedicated resources
3. Include data collection and monitoring:
4. Supported by training and capacity-building: In addition to these mandatory process-related requirements, the following
5. 5 areas recommended for content:
    - work-life balance and organisational culture
    - gender balance in leadership and decision-making
    - gender equality in recruitment and career progression
    - integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
    - measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

European Commission
Horizon Europe
2021-2027

Actions and Action Plans for Gender Equality II

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Plans under **Athena Swan**

1. Leadership
2. Resources
3. Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring
4. Self-Assessment
5. Actions eg
    1. Core Hours Policy
    2. Review and Revision of Recruitment Materials
    3. Parental Supports
        1. Leave
        2. Creche
        3. Return Support
    4. Tackling Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence
    5. Training

Athena Swan Ireland
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Impact

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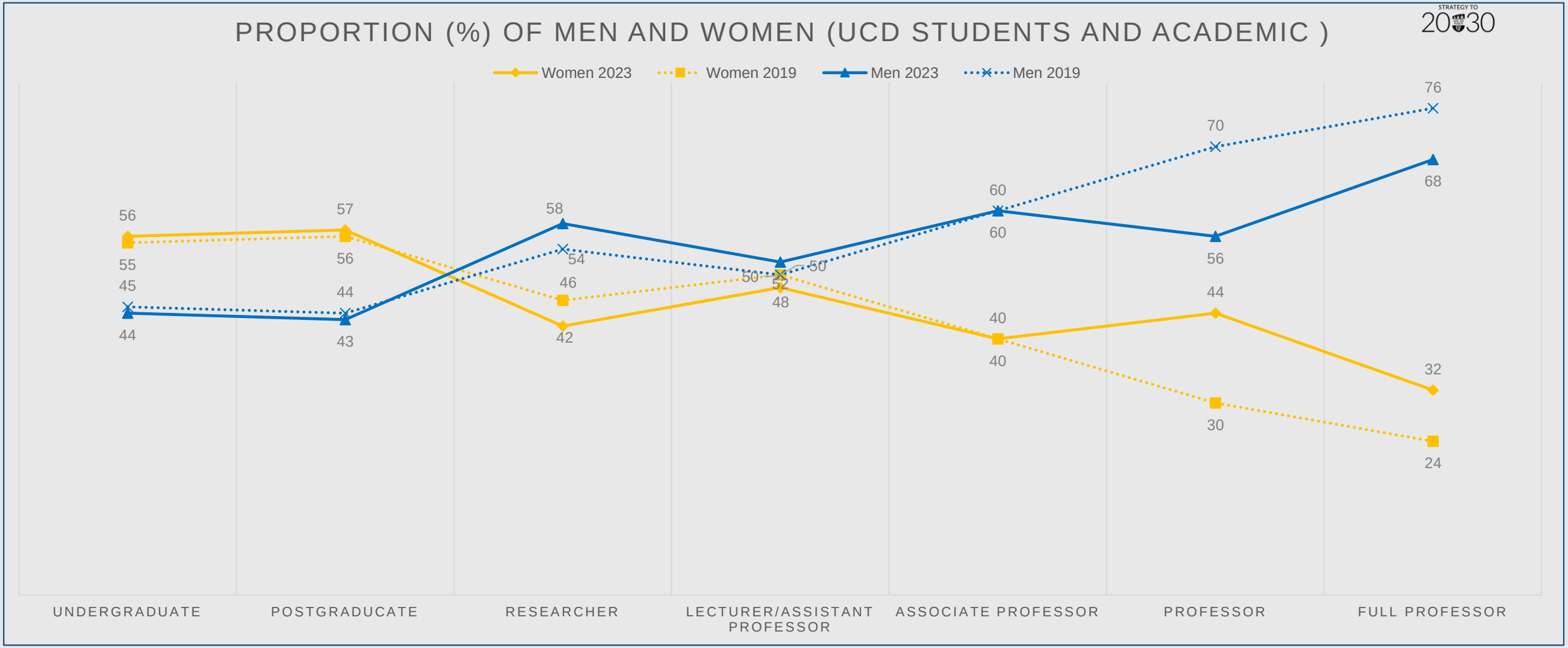

Data source:Higher Education Institutional Staff Profiles by Sex and Gender, UCD student and employee internal data records

UCD ACADEMIC GRADE	IRISH HEI EQUIVALENT ACADEMIC GRADE
Full Professor	Professor
Professor	Associate Professor
Associate Professor	Senior Lecturer
Lecturer/Assistant Professor	Lecturer

EDI and Doctoral Education – Some Questions We Can Ask Ourselves

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1. How are doctoral students recruited? Are recruitment materials proofed for EDI?

2. How and to what extent are doctoral students supported with scholarships, employment contracts, etc

3. Is there data and monitoring of participation by gender, race, disability, socio-economic status, etc

4. Is there data and monitoring of progression/completion by gender, race, disability, etc

5. Are there disciplines where participation is skewed towards particular groups?

6. What steps are being taken to promote inclusion of doctoral students in life of department/school/ faculty/university?

7. Are doctoral students equally supported with developmental opportunities such as teaching, professional development, transitions into employment?

8. Is there evidence of equal access to post-doctoral opportunities?

Conclusions and Next Steps

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- Advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in doctoral education is essential for creating a fair, supportive, and dynamic academic environment.
- Addressing barriers at all levels—structural, knowledge, funding, accessibility, career support, research culture, and intersectionality—ensures all candidates can thrive.
- Collaborative efforts between institutions, funders, and policymakers are crucial to sustain meaningful progress
- Self-assessment and action planning against key questions is a principal way forward
- By embedding EDI into doctoral education frameworks and policies, we can cultivate a more inclusive, innovative, and equitable research community for the future.