

EDI Bulletin

November 21'

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Arts,
Humanities and
Social Sciences

Welcome

Welcome to the November 2021 edition of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Bulletin. The EDI Bulletin is an initiative of the AHSS Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team. The objective of the Bulletin is to keep the AHSS faculty updated on the implementation of the faculty Athena SWAN Action Plan and related activities and to document and showcase recent EDI initiatives in the faculty.

This edition of the Bulletin contains a variety of contributions from staff and students. It features contributions relating to the newly launched Graduate Certificate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; a research project on Irish Travellers' Access to Justice; a Black History Month Event; Virtual Exchange; an Erasmus+ project; student initiatives and successes; and details of an upcoming seminar on Universal Design for Learning, among other stories.

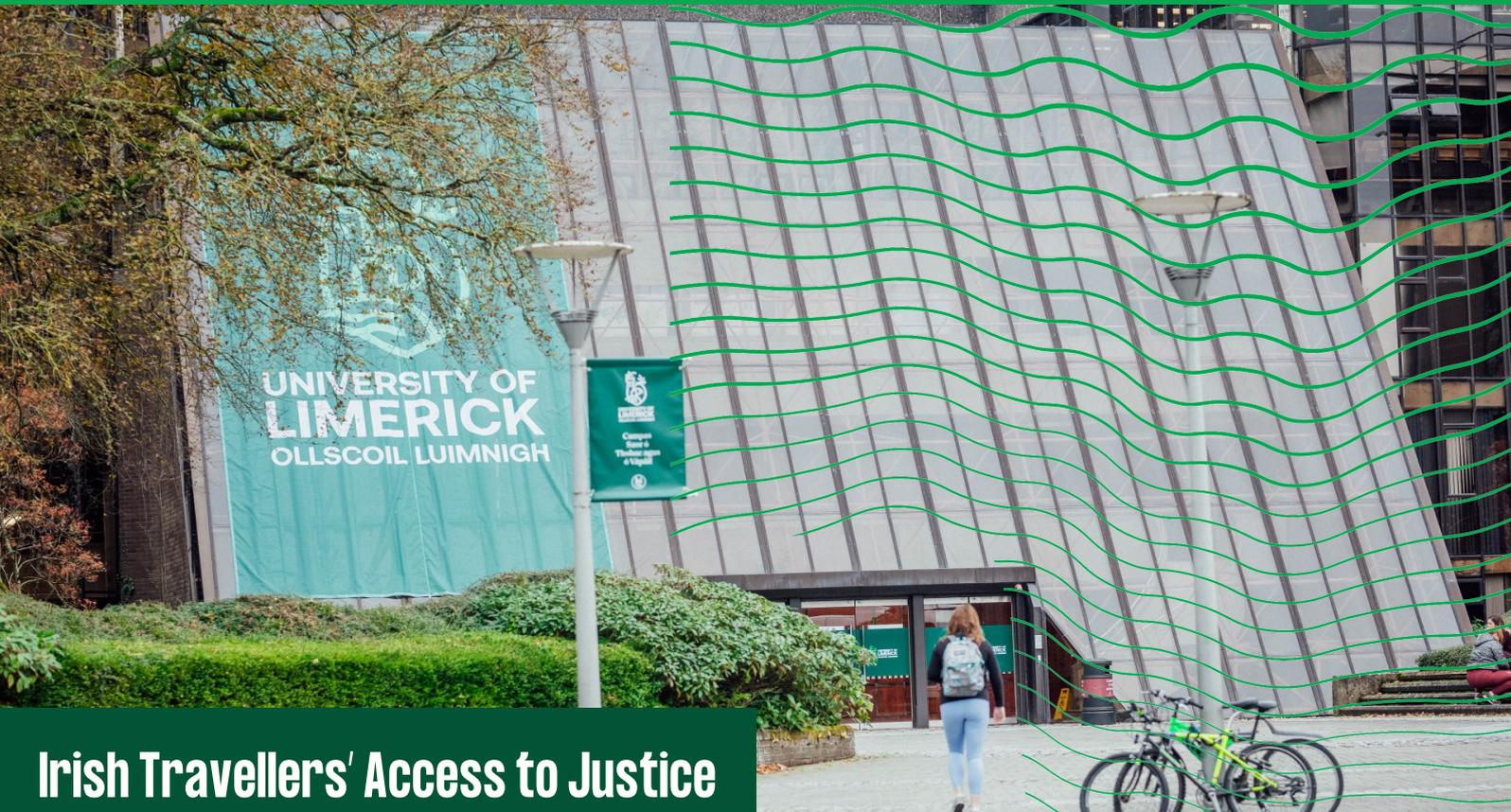


Athena SWAN Update



On 20 October 2021, Advance HE held a virtual ceremony to celebrate the Athena SWAN Ireland awards that were achieved in the November 2019, April 2020, November 2020, and April 2021 application rounds. The Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) at the University of Limerick achieved its Bronze Athena SWAN award in April 2020 and was included in the virtual ceremony. The successful AHSS application was co-chaired by Professor Helen Kelly Holmes, former Dean of AHSS, and Dr Lydia Bracken, Assistant Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Speaking at the virtual award ceremony, Minister of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD, commended the work of the self-assessment teams and commented that Athena SWAN is 'one of the most important initiatives that we have in the higher education sector in Ireland.'



Irish Travellers' Access to Justice

Dr Jennifer Scheppe of the School of Law and Prof Amanda Haynes of the Department of Sociology are co-PIs on an Irish Research Council/Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission funded research project Irish Travellers' Access to Justice. This project seeks to understand the relationship between Irish Travellers and the police and the courts in Ireland. The research aims to identify barriers and facilitators to accessing justice with specific respect to the criminal justice system, and involves interviewing representatives of regional Traveller organisations, surveying members of the Traveller community and conducting focus groups with Travellers. The research has a particular focus on those who may face additional barriers related to additional minority identities such as disability or LGBTQI+ status for example. The project employs four researchers, all of whom are members of the Traveller community: Dr Sindy Joyce, postdoctoral researcher, and researchers Olive O'Reilly, Margaret O'Brien, and David Joyce. The Advisory Committee for the research includes representatives of four national Traveller organisations – the Irish Traveller Movement, Mincéir Whidden, the National Traveller Women's Forum and Pavee Point, as well as representatives of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, An Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice. The research will conclude in March 2022.

Graduate Certificate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

AHSS was delighted to welcome learners onto the newly launched Graduate Certificate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in September 2021. The Graduate Certificate was one of 15 UL programmes to receive funding under the Springboard+ funding scheme for 2021. Springboard+ provides funding towards the costs of higher education courses. Courses are free for people who are unemployed, who were previously self-employed, and people returning to work. For employed learners on courses from NFQ level 7 to level 9, the State pays 90% of the course fee, with learners paying just 10% of the fee.

The Graduate Certificate is a one year, online, part-time programme that allows learners to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and explore strategies for change within their organisation. For further information on the Graduate Certificate, including a detailed programme information video, please click [here](#).

Microsoft Ireland, in collaboration with the University of Limerick, host Black History Month Event

by John Nutekpor, PhD candidate, Irish World Academy of Music and Dance

October is the time of year during which Ireland marks Black History Month. This celebration started by focusing on the contributions that African Americans made to America; it now encompasses the contributions of everyone who identifies as Black in the diaspora.



To celebrate this, Blacks at Microsoft Employee Resource Group (ERG) held a virtual event in collaboration with the University of Limerick Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, curated and hosted by PhD researcher John Nutekpor (pictured). The theme of the event was “Resuscitating our culture experience through the arts.” The online event, which lasted for an hour, explored the contribution of the arts in underpinning the work of African scholars in the diaspora. It featured presentations from three African scholars and artists whose works have had an impact on artistic research and communities at large.

Dr Ras Michael Courtney, an Irish Research Council graduate scholar (UL alumni) and presently a lecturer at Wayne State University, took the audience through the origins of coffee in Ethiopia along with some displays of Ethio-Modern Dance movements. Dr Gameli Tordzro, an Artist in Residence of the UNESCO Chair on Refugee Integration Through Languages and the Arts (UNESCO RILA) and a Research Associate of the MIDEQ Hub, based in the School of Education at the University of Glasgow shared a skilful display on the kora (a long-necked African harp lute) as well as excerpts of poetry from his recently launched six poetry books titled “Funtunfunefu ‘Synched’”. As well as hosting the discussion, John Nutekpor also shared examples from his PhD research into Ghanaian-Irish cultural dialogue through music and dance pedagogy, curation, and performance, and showcased his performance skills on the Gugon (a Ghanaian talking drum) in the context of cultural dialogue. The event was patronised by audiences from diverse cultures across the globe including students and staff from the University of Limerick and the staff of Microsoft.



Communication across Cultures and the Climate Movements



Arts students at FAHSS are participating in the programme Cultural Encounters to discuss and contribute to the ongoing conversation about climate change. This programme is based on Virtual Exchange and is embedded in the broadening module Communication across Cultures, which is offered by the School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics.

Communication across Cultures strongly aligns with the UL strategic goal of internationalisation, which among other objectives, aims at 'Embedding global perspectives into the curriculum, fostering cross-cultural competencies' (University of Limerick, Strategic Plan 2019-2024, p. 24.). This course offers to students an opportunity to engage in learning about language and intercultural communication and brings an inclusive internationalisation experience to those who do not have the possibility to study abroad.

The module brings the concept of intercultural learning to life in a way that is engaging and allows students to critically evaluate the importance of culture and language in intercultural communication. The first part of the course explores views of identity, culture, and intercultural communication including the role of language. Students reflect on their own cultural identities and how these might have informed their interpretations of the "other". The second part of the course is the practical part when the students engage in Virtual Exchanges, which provide them with the opportunity to achieve some of the learning outcomes, i.e. demonstrate and practise skills of intercultural communicative competence, cultural awareness and intercultural awareness and/or embrace with a deeper understanding of people from different cultural backgrounds in real life situations. The Virtual Exchange programme is provided by the non-profit organization [Sharing Perspectives Foundation](#). Their programme Cultural Encounters, initiate, stimulate and facilitate international and intercultural dialogue and collaboration to foster skills, knowledge and open attitudes among students, in this case through Virtual Exchanges. Participants in the online exchanges come from around Europe and South Mediterranean countries who engage in on-line facilitated dialogue sessions to discuss the topic of climate movement.

Lecturers and Organisers: Dr Marta Giralt & Dr Florence Le Baron



European universities and schools working together

by Dr Angela Farrell, Assistant Dean International, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

As part of the Erasmus+ K2 Majority and Minority Languages in Schools Project (MaMLiSE), academics from Ireland (University of Limerick), Poland (Adam Mickiewicz University and The Teacher Training Centre), Germany (The University of Bremen and Bielefeld University) and Greece (Computer Technology Institute and Press) recently spent a week at the Ioannina Intercultural School in northern Greece, where more than fifty percent of the pupils come from a refugee background. The aim of the visit was to work alongside teachers to develop a more inclusive educational approach at the heart of which lies the notion of language sensitive teaching. This is where, to alleviate the language burden on children whose first language is other than the majority or vehicular language of schooling, subject teachers are required to take responsibility not only for the teaching of subject content, but also for the language development of learners around the subject area. Crucially, this new approach also seeks to take account of the linguistic diversity that now exists in schools in many European countries as a strength, recognising that it brings new opportunities for all pupils as well as challenges. For instance, there is a growing awareness that bilingual and multilingual children bring greater awareness and appreciation of languages and cultures to a classroom and that encouraging children to explore similarities and differences between languages and cultures can foster a greater appreciation of languages and how different methods of communication can contribute to the learning environment. This is seen not only as a crucial pre-requisite towards helping migrant pupils develop an ability to communicate effectively in the majority language of the school, and in their heritage language, but also to develop a greater appreciation of language and diversity amongst all pupils more widely (Fleming 2009).

The rationale for language sensitive teaching thereby lies in the realisation by educational policy makers across Europe of the need to develop an educational approach that can take into account the needs of the growing number of migrant children in schools as well as providing opportunities for all pupils to develop enhanced linguistic and inter-cultural skills (Council of Europe 2014). Language sensitive teaching reflects a growing understanding that developing skills in one language will help children to develop similar skills in another language as well as in their overall literacy skills (Little and Kirwan 2019). Accordingly, enhanced opportunities must be created for pupils in the primary and secondary school classroom to experience and share language so they can gain an early and growing understanding of language as a system that can be manipulated, and to promote a stimulating and engaging learning environment. This new approach is now being actively developed in the European Union, with teachers, school managers and parents being encouraged to work together to help promote this new educational goal within whole school approaches, for the benefit of all involved.

In order to help achieve this goal, a manual providing practical teaching guidelines is currently being produced by the MaMLiSE team which will be distributed to primary and post-primary schools in the countries involved. This is alongside materials and resources for teachers and parents that will be made available through a newly designed virtual learning platform, with training workshops provided for teachers, school managers and parents. In these ways, the project seeks to improve the quality of education for children in schools across the European Union today, and in so doing, strengthens the commitment of all involved to achieving this key UN SDG. The MaMLiSE project members from the University of Limerick are Dr Angela Farrell, Assistant Dean International and Lecturer in TESOL/Applied Linguistics, AHSS, Dr Mary Masterson, Lecturer in Education, EHS, and AHSS PhD Students Michelle Daly and Andrea Latouche. Over the course of the next year, they will be working in conjunction with teachers and parents to implement this new approach in primary and post-primary schools in Limerick, and more widely.

Gorm Media: This is 'Them' online series

From 25 October to 22 November 2021, Gorm Media will present This is "Them", an online series that sees through the lens of people from 5 different backgrounds in Ireland, taking place across 5 weeks on YouTube Premiere.

Gorm Media is an impact focused digital media company that curates common ground through conversations that matter. Their mission is to spark a movement of unity and shared understanding through high quality digital media that captures the nuances, stories and experiences of our community.

In a new innovative approach to digital media, This is "Them" takes 16 Gen Zs and Millennials aged 18-35 from various communities who will be 'answering the questions you've always wanted to ask'. Shot in the Belltable Hub in Limerick City and starting from the 25th of October 2021 to 22nd November 2021, Gorm will deliver the online series to debunk stereotypes, answer awkward questions and add nuance to the experiences of young Autistic Women, Afro-Irish People, Muslim Women, Bi-racial people and Queer Men.

Streaming free on [YouTube Premiere](#), those within and outside these community groups are encouraged to join in understanding the experience of those taking part in the series and ask more questions. Gorm believes that in open communication, transformation can happen if we see each other for who we all fundamentally are, humans worthy of dignity and respect.

To produce this pilot, Gorm has partnered with Klink Studios and was partially funded by the UL Foundation Social Innovation Award.

Speaking about the pilot, Mamobo Ogoro, Founder of Gorm Media said "We are so excited to finally release our long-awaited pilot project. As a social psychologist, a lot of the work I do engages with diverse communities however I saw a gap in the intercultural/intergroup engagement in Ireland. Therefore, with a breath of curiosity, conversation and creativity, This is "Them" highlights a fresh, fun, diverse, accessible, and exciting way to engage with the Ireland of today, and show that there is always more to "Them"."

The logo for GORM features the word "GORM" in a bold, black, serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a blue circle containing a white brain icon.

Workshop on Easy-Read Notice of Rights for Vulnerable Suspects

On Friday, 1 October 2021, Prof Gautam Gulati from the School of Medicine and Dr Alan Cusack from the School of Law, at the University of Limerick convened, and led, a landmark focus group aimed at informing the design of an Easy-Read Notice of Rights Form for vulnerable suspects.

The session was conducted with colleagues at University College Cork, National University of Ireland, Galway and the University of Cambridge and it was attended by national and international experts in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, law, policing and speech and language therapy. Representatives from national disability bodies also attended the Focus Group and, perhaps most importantly, three active members from An Garda Síochána attended the online seminar thereby providing important operational input into the design, layout and content of the proposed new Easy-Read Notice of Rights Form.

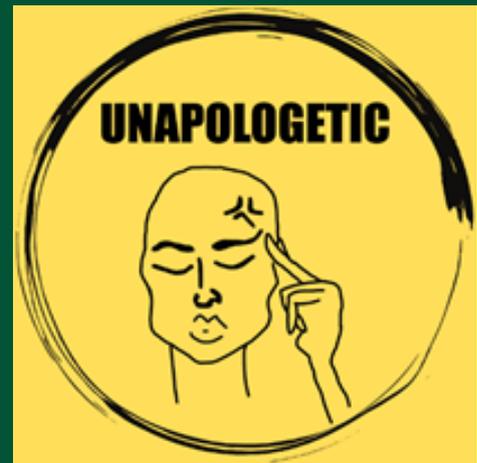
Drawing upon the findings of this Focus Group, a revised Easy-Read Notice of Rights will now be prepared. This new document will then be reviewed by persons with lived experience of intellectual disability to get further feedback on its accessibility. It is hoped that the final format of the document will be presented to An Garda Síochána in the coming months.

The development of an Easy-Read Notice of Rights can be viewed as an important step in the direction of meeting Ireland's obligations under UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Convention on Human Rights. It also ensures that Ireland, through the research activism of the University of Limerick, is progressing #SDG16 Peace and Justice.

The Publication of Unapologetic

by Gareth Brinn and Sandrine Ndahiro

On the 20th of October, Unapologetic magazine was published online on www.unapologeticmag.net. The founders of magazine, Gareth Brinn, Sandrine Ndahiro, and Professor Harper asked the contributors to reflect on the theme of 'Change Makers'. Each reader engaged with the theme in a unique manner. There are topics that discuss the Black and Irish identity, Queer issues, migration, Direct Provision, and many more interesting topics. There are no two pieces of work within this magazine that are the same. Gareth, Sandrine, and Professor Harper set out with the goal of bringing together academics, artists, activists, and creatives. This issue meets this goal as there are academic papers, personal essays, poetry, and Fiction/Non-Fiction.



Also, there is a multitude of visual work throughout the issue that also explore the theme of Change Makers. Two of the founders, Gareth Brinn and Sandrine Ndahiro also contributed two pieces to the magazine. Gareth wrote a personal essay entitled 'What if?' and Sandrine Ndahiro wrote an academic paper entitled 'Racial Issues in the Irish Context'. This issue is truly a reflection of contemporary Irish society and the issues that Irish society faces today.

This issue was truly a group effort. Gareth, Sandrine, and Professor Harper would like to thank the Assistant Editors Bríd, Fiona, and Chloe. They worked with us throughout the entirety of the process and helped shape the magazine into what it is today. We also want to thank the Board, which consisted of academics, artists, activists, and creatives. The Board included following members of UL staff and Alumni: Professor Eoin Devereux, Dr James Carr, Dr Aileen Dillane, and Dr Alena Kiel. We will forever be grateful for their support and guidance.

We also want to thank our web developer, Anthony Carey. Anthony Carey, a final year student in Product Design, designed the magazine and the website which houses the magazine. Without Anthony, this magazine simply would not exist. If you would like to follow our magazine, we are on Twitter ([@unapologetic111](https://twitter.com/unapologetic111)), Instagram ([unapologetic_mag](https://www.instagram.com/unapologetic_mag)), and we have our website (www.unapologeticmag.net).

Unapologetic acknowledges the financial support of Irish Aid, awarded through the STAND Ideas Collective Program.

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Traveller Community Scholarship

The University of Limerick Foundation has awarded a Traveller Community Scholarship to Irish comedian and presenter, Martin “Beanz” Warde, to complete an MA in Journalism at the University of Limerick. Speaking about the award, Martin said: “I’m delighted to have been awarded this scholarship, as I feel that it’s important for Irish media to be more diverse, drawing on marginalised voices in order to more accurately report on news. Up until now, all journalist perspectives about have been from outside the Travelling Community, so hopefully my vantage point as Traveller will help to remedy this.”

Dr Fergal Quinn, Course Director of the MA in Journalism, said: “Martin is the first person from the Traveller Community to have applied for our MA in Journalism since its inception, and that in itself is indicative of the access and cultural issues that inhibit participation by the Traveller community in the media. His regular, high quality, multimedia output and commitment to doing journalism make him a very worthy recipient of this scholarship”.

Globalized Connectivity Through Arts Practice

by Roxy Régine Theobald, PhD candidate, Irish World Academy of Music and Dance

I am a PhD researcher in Arts Practice and a dance instructor in contemporary dance at the IWAMD, University of Limerick. As a French afrodiasporic woman, exploring the puzzle of her identity through dance performance, I invest in my migrancy in Ireland to excavate my sense of multi-cultural belonging.

Dance performance offers an alternative source of knowledge that affords insightful perspectives on the body as both a site of historical memories and a vessel for emergent cultural dialogues. Through my dance-based research, I re-vision body memory across creativity, spontaneity and imagination, and highlight the circulation of the Francophone African diaspora lived-experience in our globalized present. Drawing on Edouard Glissant’s theorization of the ‘poetics of the diverse’ (1990) and anthropologist/choreographer Katrine Dunham’s conceptualization of intercultural communication (1969), I reformulate diversity and inclusiveness through dance performance.

My first PhD dance performance, ‘The Big sea... ‘Ashé!’, which streamed in April 2021 at the IWAMD [here](#), allowed me to cross cultural boundaries and create meaningful imaginary spaces of encounter through the exploration of spoken word, music composition, dance improvisation and visual arts. Based on the idea of water as a metaphor for fluidity, this piece outlines the richness of transatlantic dialogues in the arts and underlines the power of the performing arts to connect us all within and across boundaries.



UL AccessCampus

by Dónal O'Leary, AccessCampus Co-Ordinator



Working at UL AccessCampus provides a variety of opportunities to engage with our communities in new and innovative ways.

We were approached by students from a local secondary school who were looking for an opportunity to engage with people living in Direct Provision. Some of the students had attended the annual Community Law Programme that we organise in collaboration with the School of Law (AHSS) and had met some residents of Direct Provision Centres who were also in attendance. AccessCampus has regular interaction with Knockalisheen DP Centre in particular.

Following a series of meetings with the school (students and staff), residents, management, other education partners engaged with Knockalisheen and the relevant local Primary schools we agreed to help. We redesigned a programme that had run on the UL campus for approximately 4 years called "Fun to Learn". The core of this redesigned programme is that the Primary School children living in Direct Provision would come to the Secondary school campus as an after-school activity and would get assistance with their homework, followed by a range of creative, sporting and social activities and at the end of each session the pupils of both primary and secondary schools as well as the adults sit and have a meal together.

The bulk of the planning was put into the mealtime, as this is when the greatest amount of interaction between the generations would occur, and clear boundaries are important. At the core of this programme is the range of nationalities across all three generational groups. It is important to allow the primary school children experience a secondary campus and the different learning environment, it is a voluntary activity for the primary children and attendance has at all times been extremely high.

There has been a deep impact on the Second level pupils. Several of them are Boarding pupils at the school and in many cases are from the same country and in some cases the same city as some of the children in Direct Provision. The fact that they were from relatively similar cultures and backgrounds but were having very different life opportunities and experiences has created a lot of discussion and reflection.

One further layer to the programme has been the support offered by a UL "Social Impact" Co-op student who has been on placement with the school. Through this we have had all three (Third, Secondary and Primary) levels of education working cohesively on one programme, with benefits for all.

The programme has been on hold due to Covid, but it is intended to recommence again when deemed possible.



Upcoming Seminar on Universal Design for Learning

A National Forum Seminar Series 2021/22 event on the topic of universal design for learning will take place via MS Teams on 3 December 2021 from 12.00-13.00 convened by Dr Lydia Bracken. The seminar is titled 'Promoting Inclusivity through Universal Design for Learning (UDL)' and will be delivered by Tracy Galvin, Educational Developer, Queen's University Belfast. All welcome to attend but participants must register [here](#).



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