

EDI Literacy Glossary:

A resource to support understanding of inclusive approaches to equality work in higher education and research in Ireland



An Athena Swan Ireland project led by an expert group of academics, EDI practitioners and higher education staff.



Preface

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) literacy glossary is a resource designed to support understanding of inclusive approaches to equality work in higher education and research in Ireland. The impetus for the glossary was provided by the Athena Swan Ireland National Working Group on Intersectionality, an expert group established by Advance HE and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in 2019. Feedback received indicated that Ireland's universities, institutes of technology, and colleges would welcome a resource that could be used to support confident conversations about inequalities.

The most frequently mentioned issue was the need to talk about race equality and the capacity building required to facilitate honest, open, and constructive conversations about race and racism on campus in Ireland. The glossary provides information on terminology and language used in race equality work alongside other terms commonly used in EDI work in higher education and research. This wider approach was adopted to encourage consideration of the intersecting nature of discrimination and systems of disadvantage that can impact the experiences, perceptions, and outcomes of staff and students working in higher education. It is envisaged that the glossary will be useful to EDI training and activities in institutions, departments and professional units, as well as to individuals seeking to expand their knowledge and understanding.

A co-development approach was used to ensure that the glossary was tailored to the higher education and research context of Ireland. Advance HE is grateful to the expert group of academics, EDI practitioners, and higher education staff who generated, deliberated, and refined the glossary content. Sources used by the group are noted after each glossary entry, and readers are encouraged to engage directly with the materials produced by the [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission \(IHREC\)](#), [Irish Network Against Racism \(INAR\)](#), and [Racial Equity Tools](#), which have been invaluable to this project. While the glossary is a resource co-developed by the sector for the sector, the aim is to be neither exhaustive or prescriptive. Language relating to equality, diversity and inclusion is constantly evolving and changing, and institutions and departments are encouraged to engage with their communities on the most appropriate terms to support an inclusive approach to equality work.



Accountability

In the context of equality work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals and communities acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible and hold themselves to their goals and actions accordingly. To be accountable, one must be active and visible, with a transparent agenda and process. Accountability demands commitment.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; AE Yamin, 'Beyond compassion: The central role of accountability in applying a human rights framework to health', *Health and Human Rights*, (2008).

Ally and allyship

An ally is someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognise their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and to work in solidarity with minoritised groups. Allies commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of minoritised groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

The concept of allyship has been critiqued, particularly in the context of anti-racism work. Emma Dabiri has commented on 'the power dynamic' reproduced in the term "ally", and notes that the positioning of allyship as a 'selfless act' 'exacerbates division' and assumes 'a fundamental and immutable separateness between "different" "races", offering charity at the expense of solidarity'. Dabiri instead recommends the concept of 'coalition building', which is about 'identifying shared interests'.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; E Dabiri. *What White People Can Do Next: from Allyship to Coalition*, (2020).

Age and ageism

Age is one of the protected grounds covered by equality and anti-discrimination law in Ireland. People must not discriminate on the grounds of age when they are providing goods and services to the public generally, or when providing access to, and the use of, any place or facility.

Ageism may be defined as any prejudice against or in favour of an age group, or an alteration in feeling, belief or behaviour in response to an individual's or group's perceived chronological age.

See: IHREC, Age discrimination; BR Levy & MR Banaji, 'Implicit Ageism', *Ageism: Stereotyping and Prejudice Against Older Persons*, (2002).

Antisemitism

Antisemitism, or anti-Jewish racism, is discrimination faced by Jews or those who are perceived to be Jewish. It encompasses anti-Semitic stereotypes and myths, and includes conspiracy theories involving Jewish people. Contemporary instances of anti-Semitic racism in Ireland include the defacement of a Dublin synagogue with a swastika in January 2019.

See: INAR, '[Antisemitism](#)'.



Anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism

Black is an identifier used by some people from various ethnic groups, often of African and Caribbean heritage. In white majority contexts, Black is particularly used to describe collective action against and consciousness of racism (e.g. Black Lives Matter).

Anti-Blackness refers to actions or behaviours that minimise, marginalise, or devalue the full participation of Black people in society. The spectrum of anti-Black actions and behaviours spans from unconscious bias to motivated acts of prejudice. They include the tolerance of, or indifference to, under-representation of Black people in certain sectors or roles (e.g. politics or higher education), differential success and advancement in education and employment, and the experience of Black people in day-to-day life.

Anti-Black racism refers to racism experienced by people because they are, or are perceived to be, Black or African, or from a Black or African background.

Refers to racism experienced by people because they are, or are perceived to be, Black or African, or from a Black or African background.

See: UCI, '[Anti-Blackness: A definition](#)'; INAR, '[Understanding Racism](#)'.

Anti-racism

Anti-racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism includes individually opposing overtly racist behaviours and collectively opposing institutional racism.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Anti-racist

An anti-racist is an individual, a collective, or an institution that is supporting an antiracist policy through action or the expression of antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racialised ethnic groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; IX Kendi, *How To Be An Antiracist*, (2019).

Anti-Roma racism

Sometimes referred to as Romaphobia, anti-Roma racism refers to the racism or discrimination experienced by people because they are, or are perceived to be, Roma, "Gypsies" [a pejorative term], or from a Roma or "Gypsy" background. Roma people experience similar institutional discrimination in housing and access to public services to Travellers. Anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice are rooted in broader anti-nomadism.

See: INAR, '[Anti-Roma racism](#)'.



Anti-Traveller racism

Anti-Traveller racism involves direct and indirect discrimination, denial of Traveller identity, or insistence that Travellers are not a distinctive ethnic group. The Irish Traveller Movement notes that the core of anti-Traveller racism is the assumption that nomadism is not a valid way of life, and that the attempt to stop Travellers being Travellers is the key driver that creates the issues (e.g. accommodation, education, employment, education, and health) that Travellers face in Ireland today.

See: Irish Traveller Movement, '[Anti Traveller Racism](#)'.

Aversive racism

Aversive racism describes when individuals profess to hold egalitarian beliefs and so will not discriminate in situations when a racial motive would be obvious. For example, they may change their behaviour when interacting with a member of a racially minoritised group, but then justify their actions on the basis of some factor other than race.

See: JF Dovidio & SL. Gaertner, 'The aversive form of racism', *Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism*, (1986).

Black Lives Matter

A political movement that originated in the USA to address systemic and state violence against African Americans. Explaining the origins of movement, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) organisers state: 'In 2013—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman. The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. Black Lives Matter members organise and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression'.

See: '[Black Lives Matter](#)'.

BAME/BME

BAME is an acronym that stands for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. It includes people who might face discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, language, religion, tradition and cultural practices.

BAME (and BME: Black and Minority Ethnic) are widely used in UK research and policy on race and diversity. While BAME/BME are regularly used in the UK they are nonetheless imperfect acronyms.



One limitation to these acronyms is that they homogenise the identities and experiences of individuals who are part of diverse, but nationally smaller, population groups. As such, being as specific as possible about which ethnic group one is referring to when discussing race, ethnicity and inequality is preferable.

More broadly, the use of the term “minority” ignores the fact that some groups that constitute a “minority” in certain regions and countries actually constitute a majority in other regions or around the world as a whole. On a global scale, for example, people racialised as white are actually the minority population but they have “majority” status in Ireland.

Civil status

Civil status is defined as being single, married, separated or divorced, widowed, in a civil partnership, or being a former civil partner in a civil partnership that has ended by death, or been dissolved.

Civil status is one of the protected grounds covered by equality and anti-discrimination law in Ireland. Discrimination on the ‘civil status ground’ happens where there is less favourable treatment of one person compared to another person because they are of different civil status.

See: IHREC, Civil Status Discrimination.

Class and classism

Social class refers to the presence or lack of inherited wealth and privilege, and can impact an individual’s life chances. Class disadvantage tends to endure across generations.

Higher education has been the pre-eminent avenue for social mobility. However, in a higher education context, individuals may continue to encounter classism, or prejudice based on markers of class origin, such as accent, residential address, purported inappropriateness in matters of taste, and so on.

See: R Sennett and J Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (1972).

Coalition

A coalition refers to the organisation of more than one party into a collaborative effort to influence a situational outcome. Coalitions represent an important strategy for combating racism and for acting on other issues relevant to achieving social justice and social change. Emma Dabiri has argued that coalition, with its emphasis on working together to achieve a common goal, is more effective for addressing racism than allyship, which refers to supporting the cause of marginalised groups to which you do not belong. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has demonstrated the need for formidable coalitions to counter racial inequalities and oppression.

Coalitions represent an important strategy for combating racism.

See: MA Chesler, ‘Creating and Maintaining Interracial Coalitions: Impacts of Racism on White Americans’ (1981); E Dabiri, *What White People Can Do Next: from Allyship to Coalition*, (2020).



Colonisation and colonialism

Colonisation refers to forms of invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of people and territory as part of the expansion of imperial power and the development of a global capitalist economy. Colonisation could involve indirect rule or informal rule by colonial trading companies operating with the support of imperial powers. Settler colonisation by Europeans extinguished, dispossessed and displaced original inhabitants to gain vast territories. Colonial rule also involved the development of plantation economies in colonised territories (colonies) using unfree labour, including slaves and indentured labour. Colonial rulers introduced hierarchical divisions of people by race, religion, ethnicity, and tribe as a major means to organise and justify their rule over populations.

The long-term effect of colonisation and colonial rule was institutionalised inequality in areas such as the law, property, education, employment and livelihoods and health. The coloniser/colonised relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the coloniser at the expense of the colonised.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; M Mamdani, 'Indirect Rule, Civil Society, and Ethnicity: The African Dilemma. Social Justice', *The World Today*, (1996).

Critical race theory

The critical race theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, law, as well as feelings and the unconscious. Critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and principles of constitutional law.

See: R Delgado and J Stefancic, '[Critical Race Theory: An Introduction](#)', (2017); Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Decolonisation

Decolonisation may be defined as active resistance against colonial powers. It involves shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychological independence and power that originate from a colonised nation's own indigenous culture. This process occurs politically, and also applies to personal, cultural, political, agricultural, and educational deconstruction of colonial oppression.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.



Discrimination

Discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, or membership of the Traveller community. Discrimination can be direct or indirect.

Direct discrimination is when a worker is treated less favourably than another worker in the same situation or circumstances.

Indirect discrimination occurs as a result of institutional processes and practices that appear neutral but which negatively and disproportionately impact minoritised groups.

Protection from discrimination is enshrined in the Equal Status Acts (2000-2018), which relates to the provision of goods or services, and in the Employment Equality Acts (1998-2021), that provide protection in relation to employment.

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See: IHREC, '[Discrimination under the Employment Equality Acts](#)'; Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Disability

Different definitions of disability are used in different contexts, for example to set eligibility for particular services, or to outlaw discrimination on grounds of disability. The Disability Act 2005, for example, sets out disability as 'a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State, by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment'.

There is no definitive list of what is considered to be a disability. There can be a wide range of difference between how individuals with particular conditions are affected, ranging from mild to severe difficulties. A person's environment, which includes the supports they have and the physical or social barriers they face, influences the scale of the challenges they face in everyday life.

There is no definitive list of what is considered to be a disability.

See: National Disability Authority, '[Definitions](#)'; Independent Living Movement Ireland, '[A guide to the law in Ireland in relation to disability](#)', (2018).



Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a social construct that differentiates people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base. People can share the same nationality but be of different ethnic groups and people who share an ethnic identity can be of different nationalities.

Examples of different ethnic groups are: Irish Travellers, Irish, Polish, Swedish (White), Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black), Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian), Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American), Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino).

People can share the same nationality but be of different ethnic groups and people who share an ethnic identity can be of different nationalities.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; M Adams, LA Bell and P Griffin; *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. (2001); M Mamdani, *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities*, (2020).

Family status

Family status is one of the protected grounds covered by equality and anti-discrimination law in Ireland. 'Family status' means being pregnant or having responsibility as a parent or person in *loco parentis* for a person under the age of 18 years or, responsibility as a parent or resident primary carer of a person of 18 years or over with a disability requiring care or support.

Discrimination on the 'family status ground' occurs where there is less favourable treatment of one person compared to another person because one person has family status and the other does not, or has a different family status.

See: IHREC, Family Status Discrimination.

Gender

Gender is one of the protected grounds covered by equality and anti-discrimination law in Ireland. Discrimination on the 'gender ground' happens where there is less favourable treatment of one person compared to another, because one is a woman and the other is a man. Pregnant women, or women on maternity leave, are also protected under the gender ground and, under EU law, a transgender person who experiences discrimination – arising from their gender affirmation, or transition – is also protected under the gender ground.

As a social construct, gender can refer to a spectrum of masculine and feminine characteristics that varies from society to society and can change over time.

Gender identity is each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person's sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. Gender expression is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance.

See: IHREC, Work and Gender Discrimination; WHO, '[Gender](#)'.



Implicit bias

Implicit bias, also known as unconscious or hidden bias, describes associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without necessarily conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to overpower individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behaviour that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Individual racism

Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what they are doing.

Example:
telling a
racist joke.

Examples: telling a racist joke; believing in the inherent superiority of white people over other groups; avoiding people from minority ethnic groups who you don't know personally, but not avoiding white people who you don't know personally (e.g. white people crossing the street to avoid a group of Black young people).

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Institutional racism

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different minoritised ethnic groups. The institutional policies may never mention any minoritised ethnic group, but their effect is to create advantages for white people and oppression and disadvantage for people from racialised groups.

Example: School enrolment policies that prevent equality of access for migrant pupils.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; K Kitching and A Curtin, '[Addressing the concept and evidence of institutional racism in Irish Education](#)', (2012).

Internalised racism

Internalised racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system. A group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power.

Example: racialised groups struggle to get access to, and control of, resources for our communities. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving "everybody."

See: D Bivens, '[Internalized Racism: A Definition](#)'; Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.



Interpersonal racism

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our personal beliefs into our interactions with others in public or private, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.

Examples: public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias, and bigotry between individuals.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the understanding that social inequalities are not just summative, they are mutually constituting. The term was coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe how individual characteristics (e.g. race, class, gender) characteristics “intersect” with one another and overlap. The term was originally used by Crenshaw to describe the experience of Black women. That is, that the disadvantage experienced by a Black woman is compounded by the inequalities she faces as a woman and as a Black person, and is distinct from the experiences of a Black man or a white woman. Since then, the term has been used in different ways, and distorted. Crenshaw referred to the term's changing use and meaning in an interview with TIME magazine in 2020 and, when asked to define what intersectionality means today said: ‘Intersectionality is not identity politics...it is a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts’.

Intersectionality is not identity politics... it is a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other.

See: TIME Magazine, '[Kimberlé Crenshaw and Intersectionality](#)'; Global Society Theory, '[Intersectionality](#)'.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is the expression of systemic discrimination against Muslims, and those racialised as Muslims, on the basis of their perceived race and religious faith. It is the marginalisation of individuals or groups in daily life including education, policing, border agencies, health, the courts, and in politics.

Islamophobia can be seen on both the level of the personal and structural. With the personal, we can see it in physical attacks in public, and in bullying and intimidation of Muslims by individuals (across the political spectrum). Structural racism and religious exclusion includes criminalisation through the media, representation as dangerous outsiders, and an aggressive push towards “liberal values”, for example, prohibition of certain items of clothing, insistence on removal of clothing or items associated with the religion.

See: INAR, 'Understanding Racism'; R Gholami, 'Critical race theory and Islamophobia: challenging inequity in higher education', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, (2021).



Microaggression

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalised group membership.

Example: 'Where are you from?'

Example: "Where are you from?"

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; D W Sue, '[Microaggressions: More than Just Race](#)', *Psychology Today*, (2010).

Minority Ethnic Groups (MEGs)

Minority Ethnic Groups is a broad identifier sometimes used to describe individuals or groups within a population with particular characteristics.

Like BAME, Minority Ethnic Groups/MEGs has a homogenising effect on the identities and experiences of individuals. The use of 'minority' is also limiting as it places the emphasis on national minority status when groups may represent a global majority. For this reason, some people prefer to use the terms minoritised groups or minoritised ethnic groups.

Minoritised and minoritised groups

Minoritised, as a verb, foregrounds the institutional and societal processes through which individuals or groups are rendered a "minority", even where they may be in the statistical majority (e.g. in an individual school or neighbourhood). Groups may be minoritised on the basis of religion, ethnic background, language, history or culture and traditions.

'Minoritised' calls attention to this process, as well as to the overemphasis on national minority status, particularly where groups may represent a global majority.

Nationality

Nationality is the legal bond between an individual and their country, which may be acquired by birth or naturalisation. A person may have a different country of nationality from their country of origin and/or country of birth owing, for example, to the acquisition of citizenship in a country different from their country of birth.

See: European Migration Network, [The EMN Glossary](#).

Non-binary

Non-binary is an umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside of the binary of man or woman and thus do not conform to traditional gender roles. This includes a wide variety of gender identities, including genderfluid, bigender, pangender, agender, non-gendered, genderqueer.

See: TENI, '[Glossary](#)'.



Oppression

The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group.

See: Dismantling Racism, '[What Is Racism?](#)'.

People of colour

Racial justice advocates have been using the term people of colour (not to be confused with the pejorative “coloured people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racialised groups that are not white to address race inequalities. While people of colour can be a politically useful umbrella term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-white”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Positive action

Under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021, ‘positive action’ means that the employer can take steps that are not required under the law to promote equality for all their workers. In particular, employers can take positive action measures in relation to the gender ground, people over 50, people with disabilities and members of the Traveller community.

Example: an employer taking measures to attract Traveller employees or employees with disabilities, such as targeted outreach or using positive action statements.

See: IHREC, '[The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021– A summary](#)'.

Prejudice

A pre-judgment and usually negative attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalisations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognised equally as individuals with individual characteristics.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.



Public sector duty

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is a statutory obligation for public bodies under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. It requires public bodies, in the performance of their functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights of staff and people availing of their services.

Public bodies are required to:

1. Assess – set out in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body.
2. Address – set out in its strategic plan the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues.
3. Report – report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

All public bodies in Ireland are required to comply with Public Sector Duty.

All public bodies in Ireland are required to comply with Public Sector Duty. This includes universities and institutes of technology, and education and training boards.

See: IHREC, '[Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty – FAQ](#)'.

Race

The term race has its roots in racial categorisation schemes that were promoted by scientists to support worldviews that understood some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. As such, race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact.

While race is a social construct, it is identified as one of the nine equality grounds in The Equal Status Acts (2000-2018). The race ground is defined as between any two persons that are of different race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins. The term is also commonly used in equality work (e.g. race equity/race equality). These uses do not imply the acceptance of theories that attempt to determine the existence of separate human races. Rather, in this context, race is used to call attention to the racialisation of particular groups, the prevalence and forms of racism in society, and the need for anti-racist measures.

See: PBS, '[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#)' (2003); INAR, '[Race as a Social Construct](#)'; '[Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#)'; Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Racialisation, racialised and racialised groups

Racialisation is the processes of ascribing ethnic or racial identities to a relationship, social practice, or group that did not identify itself as such. Using the term racialised refers to this process.



Racism

Racism is any action, practice, policy, law, speech, or incident which has the effect (whether intentional or not) of undermining anyone's enjoyment of their human rights, based on their actual or perceived ethnic or national origin or background, where that background is that of a marginalised or historically subordinated group.

Racism occurs when an individual, group, structure or institution intentionally or unintentionally abuse their power to the detriment of people because of their actual or perceived "racialised" status.

Racism can also manifest at different levels and in different ways, see entries for individual racism, institutional racism, interpersonal racism, aversive racism; anti-Black racism, anti-Roma racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Traveller racism and Islamophobia (anti-Muslim racism). As such, it can be useful to refer to racism in the plural sense (racisms) to reflect the varying ways it manifests.

See: INAR, '[Understanding Racism](#)'.

Racist

One who expresses a racist idea or who supports a racist policy through their actions or interaction or expressing a racist idea.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; Ix Kendi, *How To Be An Antiracist*, (2019).

Reasonable accommodation

Reasonable accommodation refers to an employer's obligation, under the Employment Equality Acts, to take 'appropriate measures' to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the workforce. This means an employer must make arrangements that will enable a person who has a disability to have equal opportunities when applying for work, when working, and when seeking promotion.

'Appropriate measures' refers to the effective and practical changes that the employer puts in place to enable employees with a disability to carry out their work.

Example: adapting premises or equipment by installing wheelchair ramps, providing special computers for the visually impaired, installing loop systems, offering flexible working times.

See: IHREC, Disability and Reasonable Adjustment.

Effective and practical changes that the employer puts in place to enable employees with a disability to carry out their work on an equal footing with others.

Religion

Religion is one of the protected grounds covered by equality and anti-discrimination law in Ireland. Discrimination on the 'religion ground' happens where there is less favourable treatment of one person compared with another person because one has a different religious belief, background, or outlook from the other, or one has a religious belief, and the other has not.

See: IHREC, Religion Discrimination.



Sex

Sex refers to the designation of a person at birth as male or female based on their anatomy (genitalia and/or reproductive organs) or biology (chromosomes and/or hormones). Assigned sex may differ from gender identity.

The Trans Equality Network Ireland (TENI) advise that the phrase 'sex assigned at birth' is more accurate and respectful than the phrase 'biological sex', as it acknowledges the reliance on external anatomy. Additionally, in the case of intersex individuals it is not always possible to assign sex at birth.

See: TENI, '[Glossary](#)'.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation refers to a person's physical, emotional and/or romantic attraction to another person. Sexual orientation is distinct from sex, gender identity, and gender expression.

Sexual orientation is one of the protected grounds covered by equality and anti-discrimination law in Ireland. Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation happens where there is less favourable treatment of one person compared to another person because of their sexual orientation.

See: TENI, '[Glossary](#)'; IHREC, 'Work and Sexual Orientation'.

Socio-economic background

Socio-economic background can refer to someone's financial, social and/or cultural circumstances.

A range of indicators may be used to mark or understand someone's socio-economic background, such as family income, access to social welfare, if they come from a particular social-economic group, the school they attended, or the area they live in.

A *socio-economic group* is a measure of social background based on one's parents' or guardian's occupation and employment status. The measure is used by the Central Statistics Office to analyse the social background of the Irish population. Research clearly shows that participation in higher education is not evenly spread across the socio-economic groups. Children of higher professionals, employers, managers, lower professionals, skilled manual workers and farmers are more likely to go on to college than the children of non-manual, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers.

A *socio-economic group* is a measure of social background based on one's parents' or guardian's occupation and employment status.

See: CSO, '[Census background notes](#)'.



Transgender (Trans)

Transgender/Trans are umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, trans men and women, non-binary people and dual role people. Not all people that can be included in the term will associate with it.

See: TENI, '[Glossary](#)'.

Transphobia

Transphobia describes fear, dislike or hatred of people who are trans or are perceived to challenge conventional gender categories or "norms". Transphobia can result in individual and institutional discrimination, prejudice, and violence against trans and gender variant people.

See: TENI, '[Glossary](#)'.

Structural racism

Structural racism, sometimes called societal racism, refers to the fact that 'society is structured in a way (including via cultural norms) that excludes substantial numbers of people from minority ethnic backgrounds from taking part equally in social institutions, or from having equal life outcomes in, for example, health, educational attainment, death rates, infant mortality rates, incarceration rates, arrest rates, employment rates etc'.

Example: only 70% of 'Black non-Irish' people are in employment, compared to 89% of 'White Irish' people.

Example: the life expectancy at birth for Traveller men is 15.1 years less than men in the general population.

See: INAR, '[Understanding Racism](#)'.

The life expectancy at birth for Traveller men is 15.1 years less than men in the general population.

White fragility

White Fragility, a term coined by Robin DiAngelo in 2011, is 'a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves...Racial stress results from an interruption to what is racially familiar. These interruptions can take a variety of forms and come from a range of sources'. Examples cited by DiAngelo include:

- Suggesting that a white person's viewpoint comes from a racialised frame of reference (challenge to objectivity).
- People of colour talking directly about their racial perspectives (challenge to white racial codes).
- People of colour choosing not to protect the racial feelings of white people in regards to race (challenge to white racial expectations and need/entitlement to racial comfort).
- Receiving feedback that one's behaviour had a racist impact (challenge to white liberalism).



- Suggesting that group membership is significant (challenge to individualism).
- Being presented with a person of colour in a position of leadership (challenge to white authority).

The defensive moves triggered by racial stress include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate or protect a racial hierarchy where white privilege and/or supremacy is considered normal and acceptable.

See: R DiAngelo, '[White Fragility](#)', *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, (2011); Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

White privilege

White privilege refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

Structural white privilege: A system of white domination that creates and maintains belief systems that make current racial advantages and disadvantages seem normal.

Interpersonal white privilege: Behaviour between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.

Cultural white privilege: A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses, devalues, or demonises other world views.

Institutional white privilege: Policies, practices and behaviours of institutions – such as schools, banks, non-profits or the judiciary systems – that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those groups not defined as white.

See: Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'; P McIntosh, '[White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies](#)' (1988); '[Transforming White Privilege: A 21st Century Leadership Capacity](#)', (2012)

White supremacy

The idea that white people, and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people, are superior to racialised peoples, or people of colour, and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with far right and white nationalist groups (e.g. the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis), white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of colour as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and “undeserving.” Drawing from critical race theory, the term ‘white supremacy’ also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

See: Dismantling Racism, '[What Is Racism?](#)'.



Whiteness

The term white, referring to people, became a legal codifying concept in the latter half of the 17th century to distinguish black bodies considered property/slaves from white indentured labourers, who could not be mistaken as slaves. Whiteness was established as a legal concept in Virginia after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, during which indentured servants of European and African descent had united against the colonial elite. The legal distinction of white separated the servant class on the basis of skin colour and continental origin. The creation of 'whiteness' meant giving privileges to some, while denying them to others with the justification of biological and social inferiority.

Whiteness can be understood as referring to the experience and expectation of entitlement over those racialised as other, or lesser. This is seen in the normalisation of the exploitation and punishment of racialised minorities in the labour market and criminal justice system, the greater material advantages possessed by white people across the globe, and the sense of entitlement that leads white people to implicitly or explicitly expect to have their material and psychological needs prioritised over others on the basis of being white. This definition counters the dominant representation of racism in mainstream education as isolated in discrete behaviours that some individuals may or may not demonstrate, and goes beyond listing privileges to examining how white supremacy is structurally reproduced.

See: PBS, '[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#)', (2003); R DiAngelo, '[White Fragility](#)', *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, (2011); CI Harris, '[Whiteness as Property](#)', *Harvard Law Review*, (1993); S Garner, '*Whiteness: An Introduction*' (2007); K Kitching, '*The Politics of Compulsive Education: Racism and Learner-Citizenship*' (2016); DA Wilson, 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union', *Journal of British Studies*, (2005); Racial Equity Tools, '[Glossary](#)'.

Notes

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