



WE ARE VARIOUS

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Policy and Action Plan

Revised January 2026
(next revision January 2027)



1.0 Introduction, Policy Purpose and Scope

The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) is independent, works island-wide, and as a programming and resource organisation is firmly rooted in the belief that architecture is a civic right—fundamental to the fabric of our culture and a reflection of who we are. IAF exists to expand and deepen understanding, and advance thinking and opportunities for the ways architecture weaves into and shapes our lives, and what that means for us as individuals, as communities, as a culture, and as a nation. Because everyone lives, learns, works, and interacts within the built world, this policy strives to ensure that our organisational structures, operational practices, public-facing programmes and any resource initiatives established, actively mirror the diverse society we serve. This policy applies universally to all IAF board members, employees, creative practitioners, architects, volunteers, and project partners.

2.0 Our Vision¹

Where architecture is fundamental to the inclusive building of our fabric of life — culture, identity, and future.

3.0 Our Mission

To champion the power of architecture to transform lives and improve the places where we live, learn, work, and play.

4.0 Our Values

- *Openness*

We are open to ideas, inclusive of all people, and generous in creating opportunities for everyone to engage with and be engaged by architecture.

¹ These are taken from our organisational strategy, [Building Our Knowledge, 2026-2033](#)



- *Excellence*

We promote best practice in all that we do and are committed to sharing the exceptional work of others.

- *Courage*

We have the confidence to ask questions, to challenge norms, and to try things out. We embolden others to do so too.

5.0 IAF EDI PRINCIPLES

P1_Inclusivity

We believe that architecture is a civic right and that our built environment belongs to everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic background or any other characteristic. True architectural excellence and real access to the potential of architecture to transform our everyday lives, cannot exist without inclusive representation. The IAF intentionally designs its public programmes, exhibitions, and platforms to counter embedded institutional and physical barriers. We actively prioritise underrepresented voices; we value lived experience as equal to professional expertise; we seek at all times to foster an open, accessible dialogue that empowers every person to help shape the shared spaces of Ireland.

P2_Representation

We recognise that the demographic profile of our cities, towns, villages and rural landscapes is changing rapidly, and all institutions, including IAF, must evolve alongside it. The IAF commits to reflecting the true diversity of Ireland across all levels of our organisation—from our board and staff to the various architects, artists, and audiences with whom we work, partner, collaborate, support and commission. We will work to dismantle systemic practices of exclusion within architecture culture and the built environment by intentionally and publicly



creating visible leadership pathways for women, disabled people, the Traveller community, and Black, Asian, and Global Majority minoritised groups, using our advocacy role in architecture to champion the maxim of “nothing about us without us” and to be seen to lead.

P3_Equity

We recognise that equal access does not always mean equal opportunity, and that systemic barriers historically exclude many from shaping our built environment. The IAF commits to an equity-first approach, meaning we intentionally distribute our resources, mentorship, and platforms, open calls etc to amplify those most excluded. By proactively providing targeted support, funding, and accommodations for emerging practices, marginalised communities, and underrepresented architects and creative and cultural producers, we work to find better balance in the built environment and to ensure that everyone has the genuine opportunity and agency to participate in a shared future.

6.0. Our EDI Commitment

Guided by our core organisational value of Openness, we are dedicated to making room for more voices to shape our shared designed, built and architecture environment. We acknowledge that historically, systemic barriers have limited representation within both architectural practice, public engagement and awareness and cultural participation. The IAF intentionally commits to removing, in partnership and collaboration with others when appropriate, these barriers by valuing lived experience as equal to professional expertise. We actively strive to build an environment where differences of thought, background, identity, and outlook are not just protected by law, but are champion allies in architectural excellence.

7.0 Our Core Pillars of Action

7.1 Public Programming

- **Inclusive Programming:** We will design our public programming and resource supports across all six work areas to challenge norms and ensure diverse cultural participation.
- **Focused Representation:** We will proactively create pathways and lower barriers for historically underrepresented groups—specifically welcoming women, disabled people, Black, Asian, and other minorities, the Travelling Community, children and young people and elders to not only attend but actively lead and drive programmes with the support of IAF.

7.2 Community Empowerment & Co-Design

- **From the Ground Up:** We will use community-led co-design and innovative participatory models to put people first and champion individual agency, valuing various forms of knowledge and experience.
- **Democratise Knowledge:** We will work to bridge a systemic gap between architects and the public which is traditionally one of producer / consumer, instead fostering a transformative culture of reciprocity and respect through platforms of knowledge and experience exchange.

• 7.3 Representative Governance & Workplace Culture

- **Board and Staff Diversity:** In line with our values we will actively recruit board and staff candidates across a spectrum of protected characteristics, including age, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background.
- **An Island-Wide Network:** We build cross-sector, cross-border, cross-community collaborations to support graduate and practicing architects from all backgrounds to thrive across the entire island of Ireland.

8.0. Accountability and Continuous Learning



We recognise that true institutional commitment is a continuous, evolving journey. The IAF commits to regular critical self-reflection, updating this policy as new challenges and opportunities emerge. We benchmark our progress against national frameworks and will coordinate closely with sector bodies to build a better, fairer built environment for everyone. We will seek partners in and adjacent to architecture, design and built environment, noting that more progress will and can be made with others.

9.0 Policy Development Process

Our EDI Policy developed in conversation and collaboration with our Executive, Board and external stakeholders. The approach set out in our EDI Action Plan integrates the viewpoints, insights and ideas garnered through this process and through experience. The IAF also made reference to a range of national guidance documents and legislative frameworks including the Arts Council's EDI Toolkit. This EDI Policy is also to be read in conjunction with our [Audience and Development Strategy](#), which further underpins our commitment and guides our action in this area. Our EDI policy also aligns with the 4 year work plan and our 8 year Strategy, [Building Our Knowledge, 2026-2033](#).

This policy is a living, working policy. In 2026 the Board has established an Audience, Inclusion and Impact working group with whom this policy sits in terms of steering its development and continued critical relevance. In addition this work requires resources and the IAF will continue to seek supports and resources, financial and human, to evolve and deliver on this policy.

EDI FOCUS AREA	GOAL	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE	TEAM MEMBERS RESPONSIBLE	METRICS
Programming	Challenge and address institutional and cultural barriers public programming across the organisation reflect a diverse society.	• Comprehensive audience and practitioner diversity audit. • Drafting of inclusive programming guidelines. • Launch of physical, linguistic, and sensory accessibility features in flagship programmes	Year 1 (2026) – Audit Year 4 (2028) – Full Implementation	• ED, Board W/G • Programme Managers	• 1 baseline audit completed in Year 1. • 100% of flagship events meet universal access standards by Year 4.
Community Empowerment & Co-Design	Champion lived experience as equal to professional expertise through collaborative, community-led advocacy	• Integration of co-design/co-creation toolkits into continued programmes • Targeted outreach to schools in underrepresented/DEIS areas via <i>Architects in Schools</i>.	Year 2 (2027) – Framework Year 4 (2029) – Scaling	• ED, Board W/G • Learn / Place Managers	• 3+ community-led co-design projects audited • 25% increase in participation from marginalized school groups by Year 4.
Representative Governance	Evolve organisational leadership to reflect the changing demographic landscape of Ireland.	• Revision of Board/Staff recruitment policies to eliminate systemic bias. • Establishment of IAF EDI panel to inform work and programming	Year 1 (2026) – Policy Review Year 2 (2027) – EDI Panel established, new appointment policy	• Chair, ED • Board W/G	• Updated recruitment framework mapping protected characteristics by Year 1. • Expanded representation in Board or W/G diversity by Year 2.
Workplace Culture & Pathways	Intentionally create visible resource supports and professional pathways for historically underrepresented groups.	• Equitable resource allocation, mentorship, and participation opportunities. • Creation of an island-wide network for minority background graduate architects	Year 2 (2027) – Visible Supports and Action Year 3 (2028) – Island-Wide Network	• ED, Programme Managers • Cross-Sector Partners	• Increased visibility active by Year 2 across programmes and resource paths • Formalised cross-border network running by Year 3.
Accountability & Continuous Learning	Maintain institutional transparency, continuous self-reflection, and strict compliance with national legal frameworks.	• Annual progress assessments against newly established metrics • National "Inclusive Architecture" impact seminar.	Annually (2026–2029) – Progress Reviews Year 4 (2029) – Seminar	• ED, Board W/G • External Evaluation Consultant	• 1 annual accountability reports published. • 1 national symposium hosted in Year 4 with actionable next-cycle policy recommendations.

10.0 EDI Action Plan (WG = working group | ED = (Executive Director)