Gender pay gap reporting

Lessons from Queen's University,
Belfast and Trinity College, Dublin

Yvonne Galligan, Tony McMahon and Tom Millar

Introduction

The gender pay gap is a key indicator of gender equality in employment. In the last decade, reducing this gap has been a focus of the United Kingdom (UK) government as part of a broader agenda for enhancing equality. In Ireland, there has been a significant focus on gender equality in higher education as a strategic priority of government since 2016. In response, higher education institutions have informally initiated gender pay auditing. This chapter discusses the initiatives taken by Queen's University Belfast (QUB) in Northern Ireland, UK and Trinity College Dublin (TCD) in Ireland to address the gender pay gap. The introduction sets out the wider policy environment on gender pay in the UK and Ireland. It then turns to the higher education environment more generally, and examines the academic staff structure in each university, along with mapping their formal and discretionary pay arrangements. The data collection process and tailored measures to address the gender pay gap revealed by the data, are outlined. The chapter concludes by discussing the shared and individual challenges encountered by TCD and QUB and draws general lessons from their experiences.

The United Kingdom's public policy on the gender pay gap

The UK Equality Act 2010 provides the legal basis for gender pay reporting by private and voluntary sector employers in England, Scotland and Wales, excluding Northern Ireland. The UK government sought to obtain voluntary compliance among employers in order to 'minimise the regulatory burden on business' (Secretary of State for Education 2015, 30), supported by the 2011 policy paper *Think, Act, Report*. The paper provided a step-by-step framework to assist companies with more than 150 employees to address gender equality, take corrective action in recruitment, retention, promotion and pay and report on the effects of their actions and outcomes. Annual reporting on the initiative revealed that it prompted attention by the drivers of gender inequality in the workplace and yielded information on a wide range of actions taken by individual companies to redress gender imbalances (Government Equalities Office 2015).

Although embedded in the UK government's equality strategy (HM Government 2010), voluntary compliance was not widely observed by employers. Thus, the government brought Section 78 into effect on 22 August 2016, making it obligatory to address the 19 per cent gender pay gap in UK employment. The regulation provided that from 6 April 2017 employers with over 250 employees were required to report annually on their gender pay gap and gender bonus gap. Section 78 stipulated the collection of data on mean and median hourly pay across four quartile pay bands. This information was to be made available on the employer's website for three years as well as uploaded onto a government website. The gender pay gap reporting applied to England and provisions to give it effect were passed by the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales. Regulation orders to bring Section 78 into effect in Northern Ireland were not passed. Table 7.1 illustrates the gradual reduction of the gender pay gap from 22 per cent in 2009 to 17.3 per cent in 2019.

Table 7.1 Gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime), UK 2009–2019 (%)

<i>Year</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>
2009	22.0	12.2	–2.5
2010	19.8	10.1	–4.3
2011	20.2	10.5	–5.1
2012	19.6	9.5	–5.5
2013	19.8	10.0	–5.9
2014	19.2	9.6	–5.5
2015	19.3	9.6	–6.8
2016	18.2	9.4	–6.1
2017	18.4	9.1	–6.3
2018	17.8	8.6	–4.9
2019	17.3	8.9	–3.1

Source: UK Office for National Statistics 2019, *Gender Pay Gap*

Ireland's public policy on the gender pay gap

In 2017, the Irish *National Strategy for Women and Girls* identified the gender pay gap as one item in a package of measures designed to support women in the workplace (Department of Justice and Equality 2017). This statement followed a commitment in the 2016 *Programme for Government* to empower women through measures such as addressing pay inequalities and encouraging companies of 50 employees and more to conduct wage surveys (Government of Ireland 2016).

Attention to the gender pay gap was not confined to domestic politics but extended to external organisations. In 2017, the United Nations Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) noted that it was 'particularly concerned at . . . the gender wage gap, partly because women work

part-time owing to family responsibilities’ and it urged the Irish government to ‘take concrete measures to reduce the gender wage gap by enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and intensifying the use of wage surveys’ (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 2017, 11). This strong direction from a United Nations equality body complemented the efforts of the European Commission (2014) which identified tackling the gender pay gap as one of the five thematic priority areas for gender equality for 2016–2019. In 2018, the gender wage gap in Ireland was 13.9 per cent, compared to an average 16.2 per cent gap across the EU (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 Percentage gender pay gap for mean gross earnings, Ireland and EU 2001–2017

Higher education and gender pay

The UK context

Since 2010, higher education institutions in the UK have regularly conducted equal pay reviews which included a gender pay gap analysis between grades. Length of service, workforce composition and pay protection arrangements were the most commonly cited explanations for the gap. In 2018, the median gender pay gap for full-time employees was 8.6 per cent nationally across all sectors, but in higher education it was 14.8 per cent, with 37 of the 120 universities reporting gaps in median pay of 20 per cent or more (Pells 2018). A sectoral analysis of academic gender pay in 2018 found that gender pay gaps by job level were zero with the exception of professorial level, where the gap was 6 per cent in favour of

men. This finding was explained as a consequence of women comprising only 26 per cent of full professors, and by their more recent entry into this grade.

From 2010, there was a growing awareness among UK university administrators of gender pay gap performance. Sectoral joint employer-union working groups conducted research and disseminated the analysis throughout the university sector. The University and Colleges Union began an active campaign from 2015 onwards. Prior to compulsory reporting of the gender pay gap, a vigorous debate was already underway in higher education on the size of the gender pay gap and the reasons for it. Queen's University was not immune from this debate.

Queen's University academic salary scales

The UK higher education pay structure was reformed in the early 2000s into a single 51-point spine against which all academic and administrative roles are mapped. In August 2018, the scale ranged from £15,842 at one end to £61,618 at the top. In 2018, new university lecturers in their first academic post were typically appointed between point 35 (£38,460) and point 39 (£43,267) moving up the scale on an annual basis. The starting salary point is important as it determines future career earnings. There is some scope to advance more quickly at certain points in an academic career. For example, following a highly satisfactory completion of the probationary period, through accelerated promotion and on promotion to a higher grade. However, advances in these circumstances are modest, typically a one- or two-point progression. The UK framework was followed in QUB.

However, professorial salaries sit outside the 51-point pay spine in Queen's University, along with other institutions in the 24 research-intensive universities in the UK that comprise the Russell Group. Each university has its own professorial pay and progression arrangements determined according to free market criteria where supply and demand influence remuneration levels. A premium is accorded to skill scarcity and external achievement, for example Nobel prize-winning fellowship of bodies such as the British Academy and Royal Society.

Exceptional mechanisms also allow for pay advancement outside of the circumstances just described, though every university is different. Queen's University can apply the 'market supplement', normally used in cases of recruitment or retention, as an additional payment, decoupled from the salary scale and usually not reckonable for pension purposes. It is granted to new employees from higher-paying economies, such as Ireland, or for specialist and economically competitive skills that the university wishes to reward, for example from the technologies industry, medical services and the financial world. In theory, the negotiable market supplement tapers off over time as the individual advances up the salary scale to the point corresponding to the combined normal and supplementary salaries. The competitive nature of the market economy in UK universities means that issues of staff retention are often dealt with through such supplements, if progression to a higher grade is either not possible or an insufficient incentive.

In addition, line managers have the opportunity of putting forward the case of staff securing exceptional, externally recognised achievements for a supplementary pay award, which can be granted either as a one-off bonus or a one-point salary advance.

This route, the exceptional advancement scheme, is highly discretionary and relies on individual academics making their achievements known to their head of department or school over a sustained period of time. It also requires line managers to be willing to advance the case for financial advancement of individual staff members.

In 2016, professorial salaries were organised along four ranges in Queen's University, each with its own internal progression. New internally promoted professors entered Range 1 (3 progression points from £61,654). Professors recruited into the university would typically be appointed to Range 2 (6-point scale, from £69,729). Range 3 (5-point scale from £94,576), rewarded exceptional national or international achievement, such as Fellowship of the British Academy and recognised outstanding service to the university, for example as pro-vice-chancellor. Appointment at Range 4 (6-point scale from £109,483) recognises further exceptional and world-wide achievement but has rarely been used.

Progression in each of these ranges was determined through a triennial evaluation process. The outcome would not necessarily result in individuals advancing to the next point on the scale. In exceptional instances, a professor could obtain two increments, or move from the top of one range into the next. In addition, professorial salaries could also be enhanced through the informal mechanisms in place for other academic staff.

At the time of the Queen's University gender pay review (January 2017), women comprised 50 per cent of probationary lecturers (generally a three-year tenure track position), 47 per cent of lecturers and 35 per cent of senior lecturers or readers (Figure 7.2). Thus, there was a healthy pipeline in place for progression to professor. Over the course of the previous decade, women's share of professorial posts had increased from 14.5 per cent in 2006 to 22.5 per cent in 2017, reflecting the sectoral average at the time. However, that proportion had stagnated from 2011 when women comprised 22.2 per cent of the professorial body.

Figure 7.2 Gender representation in academic grades, QUB 2016

The 2014, Queen's University equal pay audit revealed an overall gender pay gap of 21.1 per cent in basic pay, and 22 per cent in total pay with total pay defined as basic pay plus payments (overtime, one-off discretionary awards and role-specific allowances, such as head of department/school) (Table 7.2). This was much higher than the mean gender pay gap across the sector of 14.1 per cent in 2014–2015 (New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff 2016).

Table 7.2 Percentage gender pay gap by employment category, QUB 2014

<i>Employment Category</i>	<i>% Pay Gap – Basic Pay</i>	<i>% Pay Gap – Total Pay</i>
Academic	13.7	14.1
Academic-related	5.1	5.4
Research	2.0	2.0
Technical	8.6	9.6
Clerical	–10.2	–9.4
Operational	16.0	25.4
Overall	21.1	22.0

Source: QUB 2017, *Equal Pay Audit 2017*

Gaps in total pay occurred in the university at spine points 2, 3 and 4 (professional support staff) where overtime and shift-working was a feature of employment, but there was no significant gender gap in basic pay. Similarly, there was no significant evidence of a gender pay gap among the academic grades on the 51-point pay spine. However, the gender pay gap at professor grade in Queen's was 11.4 per cent in both basic and total pay (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3 Percentage gender pay gap by academic grade, QUB 2014 and 2017

<i>Grade</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2017</i>
Lecturer	–0.01	1.2	–0.1	1.1
Senior Lecturer	–1.5	1.2	–1.4	1.1
Reader	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.9
Professor	11.4	10.6	11.4	10.6
Overall	13.7	13.7	14.2	14.1

Source: QUB 2017, *Equal Pay Audit 2017*

In line with UK national advice and guidance from the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland, overall pay gaps of more than 5 per cent are considered significant and are an indicator of the need for further investigation and interventions.

Queen's University data collection and analysis

Although the large gender pay gap had been known for some years, it was not until June 2016 that it became clear that it was an issue that would require a specific,

focused and, as it turned out, seismic intervention by the university. On that date, the Times Higher Education Supplement reported that for full-time professors, Queen's had the largest gender pay gap in the UK, with female staff earning 14 per cent less than their male colleagues (Grove 2016). By 2016, Queen's had been involved with the UK Athena SWAN initiative, which aims to promote the careers of academic women, for over a decade. By 2016, the university had developed personnel systems to routinely report on gender-specific data relating to recruitment, appointment, progression, promotion and salary. These reports showed that, in promotion over the period 2010 to 2016 and in progression through the professorial ranges from 2009, the success rates for women had been more favourable than for men (Table 7.4). This outcome rested on the work of Queen's Gender Initiative in motivating women to apply for promotion through a unique mentoring programme and practical advice on preparing strong applications.

Table 7.4 Percentage success rates in promotions, QUB 2010–2015

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Difference</i>
2010–2011	50.0	53.8	+3.8
2011–2012	47.3	65.4	+18.1
2012–2013	37.0	53.3	+16.3
2013–2014	46.4	45.2	–1.2
2014–2015	32.7	36.0	+3.3
2015–2016	64.7	90.1	+25.4

Source: QUB Human Resources 2017 *Promotion success rates by gender* (unpublished)

Despite positive promotional outcomes and the 2015 professorial salary review, in which 70 per cent of female professors progressed compared to 54 per cent of males, the gender pay gap increased between 2015 and 2016. In December 2016, the Queen's vice-chancellor established a project group co-chaired by Professors Galligan and Millar to undertake a forensic analysis of the gender pay gap data and to make recommendations for its reduction to under 5 per cent by 2024. The group was asked to consider best practice in other UK universities, consult with the trade unions and professors, and to take legal advice in respect of the options proposed. At the time of this analysis (January 2017), the gap in basic pay had widened to 14.9 per cent.

The group's investigation identified multiple reasons for the pay gap and also ruled out some that might hold in other institutions. In particular, it found that:

- 1 although women were more successful in gaining promotions than men, a significantly smaller number of eligible female staff applied for promotion than eligible men;
- 2 although the number of female professors had increased from 22 to 47 between 2006 and 2016, the percentage of female professors remained at 22 per cent since 2011;

- 3 77 per cent of the female professors in 2016 had been promoted internally, compared to 64 per cent of men;
- 4 of the 115 professorial appointments over the decade, only 18 per cent had been women;
- 5 66 per cent of male appointments had occurred at salary point 3 in range 2 or higher, compared with 43 per cent of female appointments;
- 6 there was a much higher proportion of males (18%) in the two highest paid ranges than females (3%);
- 7 a significantly higher number and value of market supplements were paid to males, particularly in range 2; and
- 8 the Exceptional Advancement Scheme was dominated by male applicants (88%) and in positive outcomes (80%). No women were successful over six cycles of the scheme.

The group was also able to quantify the impact of these factors on the overall basic pay gap (14.86%) as well as on a 14 per cent pay gap found among range 2 professors. No gaps were evident in other ranges. Thus, the higher percentage of men at ranges 3 and 4 accounted for 7.5 per cent of the basic gap. In addition, market supplements, which were heavily skewed towards men, both in number and value, accounted for 1.9 per cent of the overall gap and 3.4 per cent of the range 2 gap.

The outcome of the analysis, and consultations with affected professors, unions and university decision-makers resulted in a 12-point plan agreed by the Queen's University Senate on 27 June 2017. The plan provided for a monitoring group headed by a pro-vice-chancellor and actions included reducing the pay bands in ranges 1 and 2; shortening the period of progress through range 1 from 9 to 4.5 years; a commitment to recruit professorial women and men to point 3 in range 2 as a minimum starting point; and a review of the application of the market supplement for new hires. In 2019, the effect of the plan had decreased the gender pay gap to 8.4 per cent.

Ireland context

The legal context for pay and equality issues in Ireland is provided in the Universities Act 1997 (Section 25.1) which confers universities with the authority to appoint such employees as it thinks appropriate, having regard to the efficient use of resources, its accountability requirements for expenditure of public monies and relevant policy relating to pay and conditions in the public sector. Section 25(4) of the Act stipulates that remuneration for university staff should be 'as may be approved from time to time by the Minister (for Education and Skills) with the consent of the Minister for Finance'. Hence, the government determines the pay structure and rates of pay in Irish universities, including Trinity College, Dublin.

The equality provisions in the 1997 Act are more general, with the only issue relating to staff being the more general references to promotion of equality of

opportunity and the specific requirement for a university to have an equality policy (Section 36). More generally, the matter of equal pay is covered in national legislation by the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 which deal with equality in the workplace, including equal pay. The legislation confers the entitlement to equal pay for like work, prohibiting unequal treatment on nine specific grounds covered by the Act, including gender.

In relation to pay transparency, legislation on gender pay reporting (Gender Pay Gap Information Bill 2017) is progressing through the Houses of the Oireachtas (the Irish parliament) and is expected to be enacted in 2020. It is expected that the proposed legislation will require employers to disclose calculations on pay and benefit differences between men and women in their employment, along with the requirement to submit the details to a designated body and to publish the data on the university's own website. These planned provisions are similar to the UK requirements. The draft legislation indicates that reporting will initially apply to public and private sector employers with 250 or more employees, dropping within two years to include employers with 150 employees or more, and in the following year to those with 50 employees or more.

In contrast to the UK and Queen's University, the salary regime for academic staff in Trinity College is more structured and, arguably, less liable to variability in pay outcomes associated with more individualised pay structures. Although there was no legislation on wage transparency on the Irish statute books in 2017, there was some momentum in the higher education sector to examine gender inequalities in pay. This heightened awareness came from the engagement of Irish higher education sector with the issue of gender equality and the adoption of the Athena SWAN methodology and process. Trinity College, a leader in the application of Athena SWAN in Irish academia, voluntarily undertook a gender pay audit as part of the university's activities on gender equality. The analysis was undertaken by a group comprising: Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Tony McMahon, Professor Gail McElroy and Associate Professor Gaia Narciso.

Trinity College academic salary scales

In Trinity College, there are four distinct grades of academic staff, namely, assistant professor (equivalent to lecturer), associate professor (senior lecturer), professor in (associate professor) and professor of (chair/full professor). During the years of economic austerity since 2009, the entry academic grade scale (assistant professor) was reduced through the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation. While some of the impact of these measures has subsequently been ameliorated, salaries at the time of the 2016 audit are shown in Table 7.5.

Progression through the relevant salary scale is incremental, with annual progression to the next scale point, subject to satisfactory performance. Progression across the salary scales can occur either through the academic promotion process, or through appointment to a higher scale following a competitive recruitment process.

Table 7.5 Salary scales, TCD 2016

<i>Point</i>	<i>Assistant professor</i>	<i>Associate professor</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Professor (chair)</i>
1	€32,540	€69,349	€78,321	€106,516
2	€34,593	€73,272	€83,311	€112,445
3	€36,156	€77,124	€88,312	€118,403
4	€38,437	€80,916	€93,297	€124,361
5	€40,741	€84,717	€98,297	€130,320
6	€42,701	€88,512	€103,261	€136,276
7	€44,651	No further points	No further points	No further points
8	€46,615			
9	€48,632			
10	€50,708			
11	€52,738			
12	€54,852			
13	€56,901			
14	€68,063			
15	€70,251			
16	€72,439			
17	€76,948			

Source: Trinity College Dublin 2018, *Gender Pay Audit* (unpublished)

In addition to these standard processes for incremental progression, promotion and recruitment are similar to the situation in Queen's, there is an exceptional accelerated advancement scheme. Through this channel, staff may apply to the relevant academic promotions committee to progress along the scale by more than one increment in a given year. Likewise, there is a retention scheme where, in exceptional circumstances, the Provost may convene the relevant promotions committee to consider a candidate outside of the normal promotions round. Finally, the other exceptional academic pay measure in Irish universities is the departures framework which, subject to certain stringent conditions, permits the recruitment of exceptional academic staff on rates above the standard scales, for a limited term.

In Trinity College, as in other Irish universities, female representation decreases significantly at the higher academic grades. In 2016, 51 per cent of assistant professors, but only 22 per cent of chair professors in Trinity were women (Figure 7.3). This profile mirrors female representation in academic grades across all Irish universities, with 50 per cent of assistant professor equivalents and 19 per cent of chair professor equivalents.

Like Queen's University, female representation as chair professors while improving between 2012 and 2016 remains unsatisfactory (Figure 7.4) and is a major contributor to the gender pay gap.

Figure 7.3 Gender representation in academic grades, TCD 2016

Source: Trinity College Dublin 2018, *Gender Pay Audit* (unpublished)

Figure 7.4 Gender representation in chair professors, TCD 2012–2016

Source: Trinity College Dublin 2018, *Gender Pay Audit* (unpublished)

Trinity College data collection and analysis

Trinity's gender pay audit involved a review of the remuneration of 3,465 staff who were in the employment of the University in 2016. The proportions of staff across grade categories were as set out in Table 7.6. The TCD gender pay audit, using annual earnings as the input data point, analysed all categories of employment in the University (academic, administrative, research and support staff). The analysis covered all staff, as well as full-time staff only, in order to standardise for

part-time working and adjust the data for full-time equivalency. Finally, in order to investigate whether there was any gender pattern in pay progression for newly recruited staff, a cohort of newly recruited academic staff employed between 2004 and 2007 was identified and their pay progression up to 2016 was tracked.

Table 7.6 Staff representation by grade category, TCD 2016

<i>Grade Category</i>	<i>% of overall staff population</i>
Professional Services Staff	47
Academic Staff	26
Researcher Staff	23
Technical Staff	4

Source: Trinity College Dublin 2018, *Gender Pay Audit* (unpublished)

The overall gender pay gap across the university was estimated to be 9 per cent, based on total earnings in the period. In order to standardise for hours, when part-time employees were excluded from the calculations, the gender pay gap for full-time employees was estimated to be 3 per cent. Among academic staff specifically, median earnings were examined, since high-earning outliers can distort mean figures. Table 7.7 provides a breakdown of the median salaries for all academic staff in 2016, according to gender. As is clear from the table, the median is higher for male academics and this difference is statistically significant. In percentage terms, there is a 6 per cent pay gap between the median wages of men and women, with male academics earning more than female academics.

Table 7.7 Academic median salary for full-time and part-time staff, TCD 2016

		<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>%Pay Gap</i>
All Academic Staff	Median Annual earnings	€72,439	€76,948	5.9%
	Sample Size	409	509	
Full Time Academic Staff (only)	Median Annual earnings	€75,110	€76,948	2.4%
	Sample Size	296	417	

Source: Trinity College Dublin 2018, *Gender Pay Audit* (unpublished)

This is consistent with findings elsewhere and compares favourably with published data for comparable UK universities. Factoring in the nature of the contract (full time or part time) and adjusting for part-time work, by analysing only the earnings of full-time staff, the earnings gap is reduced, but nonetheless remains statistically significant.

In order to understand some of the determinants of the gender pay gap figures, a quartile analysis was undertaken for all staff. This analysis demonstrated a gender divergence at higher levels. More specifically, ‘high earners’ defined as any academic earning €90,000 or above, were examined. Among male academic

staff, the proportion earning above €90,000 is close to 24 per cent, whereas the similar figure for female academic staff is just below 14 per cent. The figures in the €120,000–140,000 band reflect the gender profile of chair professors and this finding indicates that (lack of) progression of women to senior academic positions is a causal factor in the gender pay gap (Table 7.8).

Table 7.8 Academic staff quartile pay analysis, 2016

€000's	% of total female academics	% of total male academics
90–100	3.91	6.07
100–110	4.61	4.24
110–120	0.46	1.65
120–140	2.53	8.1
140–175	0.00	0.90
175+	2.30	2.92
Total	13.81	23.88

Source: Trinity College Dublin 2018, *Gender Pay Audit* (unpublished)

Finally, a timeline analysis was conducted to track the pay progression of a cohort of academic staff (those hired in the three years from 2004–2007) up to 2016. This analysis suggested that, while there did not appear to be a gender issue in starting pay, a gender gap emerged in the median wage after two to three years of service. This finding needs to be treated with caution since it may not be reliable due to the fact that the cohort size was relatively small.

Lessons and insights from the gender pay audits in QUB and TCD

Conducting a comprehensive and accurate gender pay audit is highly reliant on the quality of data available, and in this context both Queen's University and Trinity College encountered challenges which can be expected when this type of audit is being conducted for the first time. It should be noted that, in seeking payroll data for the purpose of gender analysis, these data have been gathered, processed and stored for a very different purpose than gender pay auditing. The core purpose of a payroll function is to pay employees accurately and on time, while the main reporting obligations tend to relate to internal financial governance and the requirements of external auditors. Hence, payroll processes (and human resource processes that feed into payroll), data sets and systems cannot be assumed to hold the type of data required for wage gap auditing. Conducting a gender pay audit could lead to adjustments to payroll information to provide a richer set of data for subsequent audits.

A second note of caution relates to interpretation of findings. The common standard measure of the gender pay gap, i.e. the difference in average hourly

earnings between women and men, does not indicate or point to discrimination, or an absence of equal pay for equal value work. For example, if Queen's University had equal pay in all grades from lecturer to Range 4 professor, the average gender pay gap among the professoriate would still be over 7 per cent, due to the skewed nature of the male distribution compared to the female distribution. In this case, the gap cannot be interpreted as women being paid less than men. Rather it points to a systemic failure to get women into the more senior roles. A simplistic, and incorrect interpretation of data can result in a dialogue polarised around equal pay, in which fundamental issues, such as women advancing in leadership roles, women's under-representation in high-level high-paying jobs, the gendered nature of family care and the paucity of adequate childcare provision, are ignored.

The results of the gender pay gap audit in both universities provided greater insight into the sources, potential or real, contributing to pay inequality. The audit process contributed to learning in relation to the capacity of both universities to report and monitor gender pay differences. It also highlighted a range of issues and challenges for data collection and analysis for gender pay auditing. In both universities, it was not possible to determine hourly rates, and annual earnings were utilised to calculate gender pay differentials. For example, Trinity's overall gender pay gap, the adjusted gender pay gap figure of 3 per cent refers only to staff employed full-time at Trinity and is calculated on the difference in median annual salaries of all male and female full-time staff. While comparison of the average hourly rate is the universal standard methodology for calculation of the pay gap, it was not possible to utilise this methodology mainly because, as quasi autonomous and self-directed employees, weekly working hours are not defined for academic staff. Consequently, the removal of part-time staff from the Trinity sample, although necessitated by the nature of the available data, had the effect of reducing the overall sample size by about 20 per cent. This is far from ideal, especially since women are disproportionately more likely to work part-time (over 80 per cent of employees working part-time, across all grade categories, are women). For future audits, the aspiration would be to have pay data that is recorded to facilitate comparison with national and international pay gaps, but in the absence of contractual change in relation to working hours, this may need to be achieved through setting a normative working hours assumption.

Similar data challenges were present in Queen's University where efforts to identify the time taken, according to gender, to move from lecturer to professor were hampered by lack of clarity in the data. For example, it was often difficult to get an academic start date for staff who previously held a postdoctoral post at the university and start dates for academics who moved institutions to join Queen's. As a proxy, the date of the PhD was used to measure any inequality between males and females in the time taken to reach professorship. Also, while it was possible to obtain some tentative findings on the influence of maternity leave on progress, the sample size was much too small to draw definite conclusions. A gendered insight into pay progression is essential in order to achieve gender pay equality. Attempts to cross reference the indicative findings with other data points in relation to academic progression did

not identify any systemic issue in relation to ‘time to promotion’ between male and female academic staff that would explain a gender pay divergence in early career. Other specific data challenges relate to the level of reporting available from the casual or hourly paid payroll and consistency in coding atypical posts.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the results of the gender pay gap audits in Trinity College and Queen’s University have provided invaluable insights into the extent of any gender pay gaps among comparable categories of employees and an indication of the issues to monitor in terms of pay progression. Significantly, the data can also be used alongside other key human resource equality metrics, such as seniority profiles, recruitment trends and outcomes, as part of overall Gender Equality Plans.

Policy drivers impacting on gender pay from the experience of QUB and TCD

Both Trinity College and Queen’s University have comprehensive equality and diversity policies which set out the institutional commitment to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. These policies include specific human resource equality measures in relation to recruitment, advertising and selection, but do not specifically address equal pay. The respective salary structures and salary progression arrangements for academic staff in each institution are set out in detail earlier in this chapter. In addition, the following processes are also determinants of academic staff pay. Reviewing policy on these issues and monitoring the outcomes from process implementation of these policies will complement the existing data analysis. Typical processes that would be considered are:

- starting pay: the rate of pay for newly recruited or promoted staff;
- pay progression: employee pay progression can be through advancement along the incremental scale, or through promotion/appointment to a higher scale, as set out earlier. A key metric to consider is any gender differences in the time taken to progress through the grade structure;
- increments: generally paid annually subject to verification of satisfactory performance;
- accelerated advancement: certain grades within Trinity and all non-probationary staff in Queen’s may apply to the relevant channels for their grade to advance along the scale by more than one increment in a given year;
- promotion: employees may seek promotion to a higher grade through the two universities’ promotion procedures and the outcomes are generally reported to university governing bodies;
- time at grade: this can indicate a systemic bias operating in promotions and advancement practices;
- job requisitioning: decisions to create new posts, or to appoint staff replacements to existing roles are generally processed through a job requisitioning or posts approval process. In both universities, this is devolved to faculty and divisional level;

- provisions for specific retention or supplementation arrangements, in addition to standard promotion or pay progression schemes, present specific risks for gender equal pay decision-making and should be assessed as part of the gender pay audit process.

Conclusions

Comparing and contrasting the pay progression process

The gender pay gap cases of Trinity College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast illustrate two very different environments for tackling the issue. In the QUB case, market conditions mean that there can be a wide variation between universities on professorial pay. In Ireland, a more structured and centralised approach to pay determination is adopted allowing much less room for wage variance in the Irish higher education system. Despite operating in very different policy environments, the factors contributing to the gender pay gap in both institutions are broadly similar. One obvious shared characteristic is the lack of women at senior academic levels in both institutions, despite there being a relatively healthy pipeline for women's advancement. The question is, then, what is preventing women from making their way to the higher-paid echelons of a university career? Demonstrably, in both institutions, the valuing of the work of male academics over that of their female counterparts in promotions processes plays a part. Women's service in senior posts, when they finally make this grade, is likely to be shorter than that of their male colleagues. In tackling the gender pay gap, close attention needs to be paid to the gendered nature of the academic promotion and recruitment processes, particularly at full chair professorial level.

Both universities also demonstrate distortions in the exceptional pay reward mechanisms, though these are exhibited to a greater degree and scale in Queen's University. Success in an exceptional process, such as accelerated advancement and retention, relies on the subjective judgement of a small number of people, including an individual's line manager who is typically the head of department or school. These processes are not as widely promoted, or understood, as are public recruitment and standard academic promotion processes and, with the perceived lack of transparency, can create a risk of pay inequality.

The audit process

The need for, and quality of, the collaboration between data and process owners and Gender Equality Plan leaders is imperative. The source data to be analysed in a gender pay audit is unlikely to have been designed with gender disaggregated reporting in mind, so adapting processes and data to facilitate greater interrogation and monitoring over time will require collaboration towards a shared purpose.

A second key issue is in relation to how the available data are viewed. Disaggregation of data to the appropriate level, such as job categories and grades, and university, faculty and school-level analysis, is essential if one of the objectives of a

gender pay audit is to use the findings as a basis for action. Using a number of different lenses, for example median figures and quartile analysis, to review the data and identification of trends, rather than one point in time analysis, is invaluable.

Finally, the audit process can be viewed as a lever for effective change and not just as a passive compliance or governance exercise. This chapter has highlighted the additional institutional insight that gender pay audits can provide over and above societal and legislative requirements. Analysis of the gender pay gap among comparable roles (in this case academic staff at various levels) using different lenses, provided more accurate insights into the nature of any gender pay gap and its causes, thus providing a basis for action to address it.

References

- Department of Justice and Equality (2017) *National strategy for women and girls 2017–2020: Creating a better society for all*, Department of Justice and Equality, Dublin.
- European Commission (2014) *Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency*, 7 March 2014/124/EU. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014H0124&from=EN>
- Government Equalities Office (2015) *Policy paper: Think, act, report*. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/think-act-report/think-act-report
- Government of Ireland (2016) *A programme for a partnership government 2016*. Available at: www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme_for_Partnership_Government.pdf
- Grove, J. (2016) University of Essex hikes salaries for female professors to eliminate gender pay gap, *Times Higher Education*, 2 June. Available at: www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-of-essex-hikes-salaries-for-female-professors-to-eliminate-pay-gap
- HM Government (2010) *The equality strategy—building a fairer Britain*, Government Equalities Office, London. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85299/equality-strategy.pdf
- New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (2016) *Higher education gender pay gap data*. Available at: https://uceastorage.blob.core.windows.net/ucea/download.cfm/docid/new_jnches_-_higher_education_gender_pay_gap_data.pdf
- Office for National Statistics (2019) *Gender pay gap*. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2019#the-gender-pay-gap (last accessed 14 January 2020)
- Oireachtas (2017) *Irish human rights and equality commission (gender pay gap information) Bill*, 16 May. Available at: www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2017/64/
- Pells, R. (2018) Gender pay gap: How much less are women paid at your university? *Times Higher Education*, 6 April. Available at: www.timeshighereducation.com/news/gender-pay-gap-how-much-less-are-women-paid-your-university
- Queen's University Belfast (QUB) (2017) *Equal pay audit 2017*. Available at: www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/hr-filestore/Filetoupload,865185,en.pdf
- Queen's University Belfast (QUB) Human Resources (2017) *Promotion success rates by gender 2010–2015* (unpublished).
- Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities (2015) *Memorandum to the women and equalities select committee on the post-legislative assessment of*

the Equality Act 2010 (CM9101). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441838/Memo_to_Women_Equalities.pdf

Trinity College Dublin Human Resources (2016) *Academic pay scales 2016* (unpublished).

Trinity College Dublin Human Resources (2018) *Gender pay audit 2018* (unpublished).

UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (2017)

Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ireland, 9 March, CEDAW/C/IRL/co/6-7. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/596f48a94.html