

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION TOOLS



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Primary Data Collection Tools

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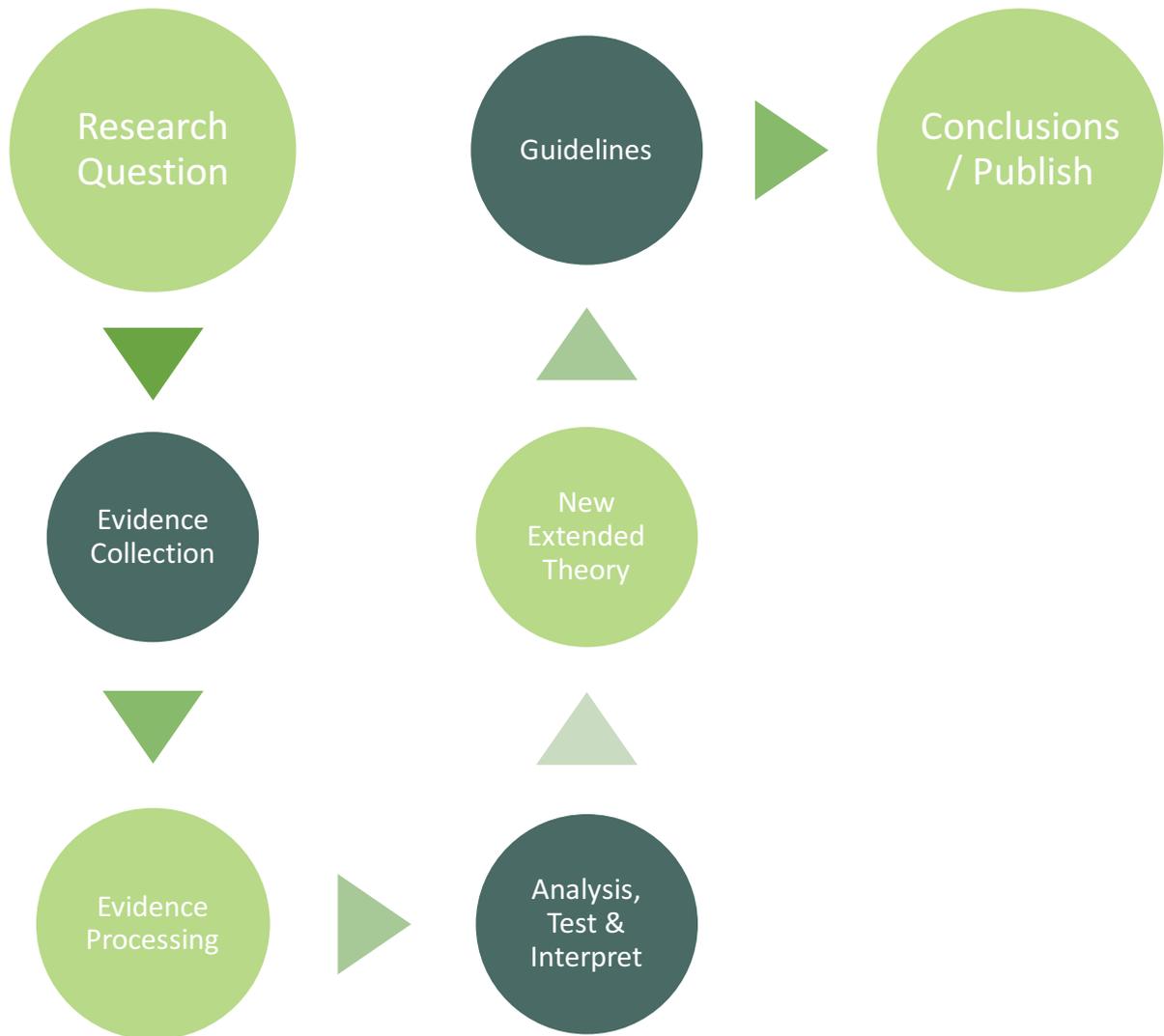
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Introduction

This document sets out some preliminary tools and templates that can be adapted for use in partner institutions.

Figure 1 **Data Collection Processes**



1. Surveys

Survey research is a systematic method of collecting data on a representative cross section of your target population.

Structured Steps:

- 1) Determine the research objectives
- 2) Decide on a sampling strategy
- 3) Select a data collection method/medium
- 4) Design questionnaire
- 5) Pilot the survey questionnaire
- 6) Undertake full survey
- 7) Data entry/cleaning
- 8) Conduct the analysis

In order to raise the response rate to surveys (Dillman, 2000) recommends issuing a notification in advance of the questionnaire, alerting potential respondents to the themes and importance of the study, ideally endorsed by the Head of the institution (or Officer responsible for gender equality), followed by the issue of the questionnaire within 10 days. A follow-up reminder may be sent to ALL recipients, within 7-10 days of issue of the questionnaire. Given the emphasis (under data protection legislation and ethics requirements) on anonymity, it is not possible to specifically target non-respondents hence the same mailing list must be used for each communication.

Guidelines for survey design:

- Design first page/screen with preamble about the survey objectives followed by instructions to complete it (Ethics Committee requirement)
- Keep questionnaire as short as possible
- Stress confidentiality
- Make sure that EACH question is relevant
- Choose the correct question type
- Ensure questions in progressive/logical order
- Keep wording simple – use plain language
- Do not use leading questions, biased questions, confusing or overly-long questions

Template Gender Equality Questionnaire

A comprehensive questionnaire designed to identify issues of concern from a gender equality perspective was designed, piloted, and fully implemented at Trinity College Dublin. The questions used were selected in the context of the culture and environment of the institution. However the categories covered reflect those more generally occurring in questions of gender equality in academic careers, and could be used as the basis for customized questionnaires in partners' own institutions. The full questionnaire is included as Appendix A in this document.

2. Focus Groups

By their nature focus groups are designed to facilitate a free and candid discussion of key issues. Group discussions and focus groups provide an alternative to one-on-one interviews and are used to gather data relating to the feelings and opinions of a group of people who are involved in a common situation. They can be conducted face-to-face or via tele-/video-conferencing, etc.

Overview:

- 4 – 12 participants
- Guided by a moderator/facilitator
- Promotes interaction
- Can provoke buried responses and allow airing
- May cause some participants to 'opt out' or remain silent
- The challenge is to ensure that all members feel comfortable participating and that no individual(s) dominate thereby impeding the dynamic flow
- Participants should be informed of the questions or discussion topics in advance.

Guidelines

The precise number of focus group participants depends on the nature of the individuals, the topic and the skill of the moderator/facilitator. The more complex the subject matter, the smaller the number of participants (Saunders et al 2016).

Collis and Hussey (2003) recommend the following steps in forming and running a focus group:

- Invite a group of people, with sufficient experience in common (e.g. early career researchers), to attend at a neutral location
- Introduce the group members and outline the purpose of the study and how the focus group will be conducted
- Start the session with a broad open question – which may be on a flip chart or overhead projector screen
- Allow the group to discuss the topics, intervening to ensure that all participants have an opportunity to contribute
- Use the list of prepared topics/questions that have been circulated in advance
- Record the proceeds on tape/video for subsequent analysis/synthesis.

According to Saunders et al (2016), participants are normally chosen using non-probability sampling, often with a specific purpose in mind to best reflect the views of the target group who are critical to the study/project. Invitations to attend should come directly from the researcher/team leader rather than through managers/supervisors, to stress the voluntary nature of the call. Participants need to be grouped (according to their grade/status and/or similar work experiences) to ensure that they will not feel inhibited in voicing their possible contributions.

Gender Equality Focus Group Topics and Questions

A possible structure for a focus group on gender equality in academia would be to select 5 questions from the following list (adapting them as appropriate to the context):

1. How do you think the experience of being an academic/research staff member at this institution is different for women than it is for men?
2. Why, do you think, are there so few women in senior positions?
3. Does gender make any difference in access to resources at this institution, for example in relation to salary, teaching loads, committee assignments, lab space, access to clerical or other support, institutional research funds, sabbatical or other leaves?
4. Do you think gender makes any difference in everyday interaction among academic/research staff, or between academic/research staff and administrators?
5. Have you experienced, or known others to experience, bullying or harassment in this institution?
6. Do current flexible working arrangements meet the needs of staff?
7. Does the experience of work-life balance differ for men and women academic/research staff? Do women and men face different issues in balancing work and personal/family demands?
8. Do you think the issues facing women change across the academic career – as they move from early career to full professor?
9. What barriers exist in relation to getting promotion at this institution? Are there any differences in how these affect men and women?
10. What other issues have you identified, or would you like to explore under the broad umbrella of gender equality?

There are no firm rules as to the gender mix of focus group participants. Generally in a gender equality study, the norm would be to invite all genders unless the topic dictated otherwise e.g. experience of returning to academe, after maternity leave; measures that might induce fathers to avail of paternity/parental leave.

3. Interviews

In the context of academic research, an interview is a technique for acquiring spoken evidence from a knowledgeable informant in order to assist in answering a research question. Interviews are beneficial for eliciting individual experiences, and for approaching more sensitive topics. The objective is generally to achieve greater depth than may be possible through other research methods.

There are four main types of interview:

1. Closed quantitative

This makes use of a verbal questionnaire, and results in mostly numeric evidence being acquired.

2. Structured open-ended

This approach is highly controlled by the interviewer. The questions asked are typically standardized and very structured, but interviewees are free to answer as they wish. All interviewees are asked the same questions, in the same order. While this may reduce bias, it can also limit flexibility.

3. Interview guide approach

This form is less structured than the previous two. Interviewees will receive an outline briefing in advance of the interview, but it then takes a more conversational approach and offers greater freedom to explore avenues of enquiry as they may arise. It is more free-form, but consequently some topics could be omitted inadvertently, and it is harder to compare responses.

4. Informal conversation

This type lacks any formal structure, but rather follows the natural course of discussion and allows questions to emerge from that. The interviewer does not direct the conversation, and the interviewee is free to give opinions and experiences in their own way. It allows for more in-depth probing but makes subsequent reporting more difficult.

Research ethics are very important when it comes to interviews. If for any reason the interviewer suspects the integrity of the data supplied by the informant it is necessary to make further enquiries before including the data in any analysis.

Sample Interview Protocol: Women in Academia and Research

These questions are adapted from the Interview Protocol (2006) developed and employed by WISELI, University of Wisconsin-Madison, under the research project In-Depth Interviews with Women Faculty and Staff in STEM, available online at: <http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/interviews.php>

1. Tell me how you got to where you are today in your current position at [institution]. Start as early as you like.
2. Let's talk about your department/unit/lab:
 - a. Briefly describe it to me (how large? Diversity of gender, race, age, etc.?)
 - b. What is the working environment like?
 - c. Do you have, or have you had, a leadership role? Would you like to have one in the future?
 - d. Are there initiatives that could be implemented to improve your experience of the working environment? (e.g. leadership training, professional development workshops, unconscious bias training for staff in management roles)
3. Work-Life Balance
 - a. Describe your commitments and interests outside of work.
 - b. How do these commitments affect your work?
 - c.
4. Career Development
 - a. How has your career evolved during your time at [institution]?
 - b. Do you feel that your work has been supported and recognized?
 - c. If so, how?
 - d. Are there ways in which you feel you have not been supported?
5. Gender
 - a. In your view, did gender affect your early career aspirations, experiences or plans?
 - b. Does it affect your current experience of working?
 - c. What is it like to be a woman working in your field in this institution?
 - d. How, if at all, do you think gender might play a role in your future career?
 - e. Have you observed any differences between the career choices or paths of women and men in your department/unit?
6. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

References & Further Reading

Dillman, D. A. (2000), *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (2nd ed.), New York: Wiley.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016), *Research Methods for Business Students* (7th. Edition), Harlow: Pearson.

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2003), *Business Research*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Appendix: Survey of Academic and Research Staff in Trinity College Dublin

Consent

Dear Colleague,

You are invited to participate in the survey of academic and research (including postdoc) staff. The objective of this survey is to examine career ambitions, experiences and perceptions of the working environment as part of the INTEGER FP7-funded project activities. The survey draws upon the Athena Survey of Science, Engineering and Technology (ASSET) conducted across UK universities (in 2003, 2006, and 2010) and on surveys developed from funding from the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Program.

On behalf of Trinity College, you are asked to devote 25-30 minutes to complete an online survey that will focus on career ambitions, experiences and perceptions of the academic working environment.

The results will be analyzed and used to determine where to target future action most effectively within College and the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science. Your input to this research is critically important and your co-operation much appreciated.

All responses will be treated in total confidence.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Individual results may be aggregated anonymously and research reported on aggregate results. The survey results will form part of a report for distribution throughout College. Only grouped data will be used; no individual will be identifiable in any report (or journal article). In keeping with standard professional practice, your data may be retained for 10 years, during which time only the investigators on this project will have access to them. The identity of you and all participants will be totally confidential.

Conflict of Interest

This survey is being conducted by Professor Eileen Drew edrew@tcd.ie, Director of WiSER and Professor in the School of Computer Science & Statistics (ph. 896 3415). It is acknowledged that this represents a possible conflict of interest because Professor Drew works for the university where you are engaged. In respect of this acknowledgement I ask that you act with integrity if you take part and Professor Drew undertakes to do the same as the researcher.

This research has been approved by the School of Computer Science and Statistics Ethics Committee.

Declaration

I am 18 years or older and am competent to provide consent. I have read, or had read to me, a document providing information about this research and this consent form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and understand the description of the research that is being provided to me.

I agree that my data is used for scientific purposes and I have no objection that my data is published in scientific publications in a way that does not reveal my identity.

I understand that if I make illicit activities known, these will be reported to appropriate authorities.

I understand that I may stop electronic recordings at any time, and that I may at any time, even subsequent to my participation have such recordings destroyed (except in situations such as above).

I understand that, subject to the constraints above, no recordings will be replayed in any public forum or made available to any audience other than the current researchers/research team. I freely and voluntarily agree to be part of this research study, though without prejudice to my legal and ethical rights.

I understand that I may refuse to answer any question and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

I understand that my participation is fully anonymous and that no personal details about me will be recorded.

I have received a copy of this agreement.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being

* Would you like to proceed with the survey?

- Yes, I wish to proceed to the survey
- No, I do not wish to proceed to the survey

Section 1: CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Each question is optional. Feel free to omit a response to any question: however, I would be grateful if all questions are responded to.

1.1 What is your current grade?

- Chair/Professor (formerly Professor)
- Professor (formerly Associate Professor)
- Associate Professor (formerly Senior Lecturer)
- Assistant Professor (formerly Lecturer)
- Research Fellow
- Senior Research Fellow
- Other (please specify)

1.2 What year were you appointed to your first academic position in TCD?

1.3 What age were you when appointed to this academic position in TCD?

- Under 30
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- over 60 years

1.4 What percentage of your working time do you currently spend in each of the following areas?
(Your answer should total 100%)

- Teaching
- Research (including postgraduate supervision)
- Academic administration
- Pastoral care (incl. College Tutor)
- Consultancy
- Other

What percentage of your working time would you like to spend in each of the following areas? (Your answer should total 100%)

- Teaching
- Research (including postgraduate supervision)
- Academic administration
- Pastoral care (incl. College Tutor)
- Consultancy
- Other

If you would like to spend more time working on specific areas, what prevents you from doing so and what do you think would facilitate you?

[Dialogue box]

1.5 To achieve promotion, what percentage of your working time do you think you need to spend in each of the following areas? (Your answer should total 100%)

- Teaching
- Research (including postgraduate supervision)
- Academic administration
- Pastoral care (incl. College Tutor)

- Consultancy
- Other

1.6 Which of the following academic tasks do you currently engage in?

[Yes/No boxes for all]

- Publish one or more peer reviewed journal article (or equivalent) per annum
- Apply for external research funding (if required)
- Supervise Masters by research students
- Supervise PhD students
- Present/chair at conferences

Section 2: CAREER HISTORY AND ASPIRATIONS

2.1 What factors influenced you to enter academia? (Please select 3 ranked by order of importance from 1 to 3, where 1 = Most important)

- Permanent position
- Salary level
- Interest in research
- Autonomy/self-direction
- Intellectual challenge
- Flexible working arrangements
- Other (please specify)

2.2 Do you feel that you have achieved your career ambitions in terms of grade attainment? Yes

- No
- If YES, how?
- If NO, why?

2.3 Would you be interested in being a:

- College Officer
- Faculty Dean
- Head of School

Answer (for each): Yes / No / Don't know / Already have been

Please give the reason(s) for your answer(s)?

[Dialogue box]

2.4 Do you expect to achieve a senior management position (e.g. College Officer, Faculty Dean, Head of School)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Already have been

Please give the reason(s) for your answer(s)?

[Dialogue box]

2.5 Have you ever served on a College Committee? (Please select all that apply)

- Chair
- Member
- Never served

2.6 Which of the following Committees have you served on, if any? (Please select all that apply)

- Recruitment - Selection Committees for academic appointments
- Promotion and Review Committees
- Audit Committee
- Estates Committee
- Finance Committee
- Heads of Schools Committee
- Human Resources Committee
- Library and Information Policy Committee

- Student Services Committee
- Graduate Studies Committee
- International Committee
- Research Committee
- Undergraduate Studies Committee
- Coiste Na Gaeilge
- Equality Committee
- Quality Committee
- College Safety Committee
- Departmental Management Board
- Faculty Board
- Other (please specify) _____

In what way(s), if any, did committee membership benefit your career in TCD?

[Dialogue box]

2.7 Have you applied for an academic promotion (excluding merit bar) within Trinity College?

- Yes
- No

If yes,

How many times did you apply?

[Dialogue box]

How many times were you successful?

[Dialogue box]

2.8 What would encourage you to apply for promotion?

[Dialogue box]

2.9 What would discourage you from applying for promotion?

[Dialogue box]

2.10 Have you ever applied for Fellowship?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many times?

[Dialogue box]

Were you successful?

- Yes
- No

If no, what was your reason(s) for not applying?

[Dialogue box]

2.11 What has helped your career progression in TCD?

[Dialogue box]

2.12 What has impeded your career progression in TCD?

[Dialogue box]

Section 3: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

3.1 What is your understanding of work-life balance?

[Dialogue box]

3.2 How satisfied are you with the current balance between your professional and personal life?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied/dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

If relevant, what do you think would help you achieve a better work-life balance?

[Dialogue box]

3.3 Have you ever availed of any of the following flexible working arrangements in your academic career in TCD? (Please select all that apply)

- Career break
- Sabbatical
- Other unpaid leave
- Part-time working
- Job share
- Term-time working
- Other (please specify) *[Dialogue box]*

3.4 Would you like to avail of any of the following flexible working arrangements in your academic career? (Please select all that apply)

- Career break
- Sabbatical
- Other unpaid leave
- Part-time working
- Job share
- Term-time working
- Other (please specify) *[Dialogue box]*

3.5 Do you regularly work from home?

- Yes
- No

If you regularly work from home, how often do you do so?

- Evenings and/or weekends only
- One to several days per month
- Half a day to one day a week
- Several days a week
- Other (please specify) Career break
- Sabbatical
- Other unpaid leave
- Part-time working
- Job share
- Term-time working
- Other (please specify) *[Dialogue box]*

3.6 How many hours on average do you work per week?

[Dialogue box]

3.7 Do you tend to work weekends/evenings in addition to normal working hours?

- Yes
- No

If yes, why?

[Dialogue box]

3.8 How frequently do you travel for work purposes (for an overnight stay or longer) e.g. for meetings/conferences?

- Never
- 1 or 2 times per year
- 3 or 4 times per year
- 5-9 times per year
- 10-12 times per year
- >12 times per year
- Fortnightly

3.9 Have you taken any family related leave while working in Trinity College?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please select all that apply and indicate how many leaves you have taken:

- Maternity Leave *[select number]*
- Paternity Leave *[select number]*
- Adoption Leave *[select number]*
- Parental Leave *[select number]*
- Leave for other caring responsibilities *[select number]*

3.10 Did you experience any difficulties in returning to work in Trinity College after this/these leave(s)?

- No
- Yes

If YES, please elaborate

[Dialogue box]

3.11 What support(s), if any, did you receive from College during and after your family related leave(s)? (please tick all that apply)

- Clear information about your rights and responsibilities during or prior to break
- 'Keep in touch' opportunities during break
- Provision for continuation of research, publication and/or funding applications during break
- Option of flexible working options after break
- Reduced teaching or service responsibilities (to allow you to focus on research, publications and/or funding applications) after break
- Other (please specify) *[Dialogue box]*

3.12 Please comment on what support you would find helpful when taking family related leave:
[Dialogue box]

Section 4: DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL or RESEARCH UNIT ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements concerning conditions in your School by checking the following boxes:

[Each statement rated on scale: Strongly agree/ Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Not applicable/no views]

- I constantly feel under scrutiny by my colleagues in my School
- I feel able to put forward my opinions
- I feel that my contribution to the School is valued
- I do not feel able to express my preferences in relation to my research interests and career choices
- My colleagues always seek my opinions on research ideas and problems I feel that I do not 'fit in' easily within my School
- I have access to suitable role models
- I work harder than my colleagues do, in order to be perceived as a legitimate scholar
- I seldom have the opportunity to participate in important committees/meetings/projects
- I have received encouragement from senior colleagues to apply for a promotion
- I am reluctant to bring up issues that concern me for fear that it will affect my career/promotion
- There are many unwritten rules concerning how one is expected to interact with colleagues

4.2 Please rate the culture of your School against the following criteria:

[Each statement rated on scale: Strongly agree/ Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree]

- Friendly
- Collaborative
- Supportive
- Cooperative
- Inclusive
- Non-sexist
- Diverse
- Respectful
- Transparent

4.3 How satisfied are you with the following dimensions of your working environment?

[Each statement rated on scale: Very satisfied/ Satisfied/ Dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied]

- Opportunities to collaborate with other (non)faculty members
- Degree of social interaction with members of my School
- Levels of funding for my research or creative efforts
- Current salary in comparison with the salaries of my colleagues
- Ability to attract students to work with me
- Sense of being valued for my teaching by members of my School
- Sense of being valued for my research, scholarship, or creativity by members of my School

4.4 Please describe the management style & practices in your School

[Dialogue box]

Section 5: BULLYING/HARASSMENT

5.1 In your current working environment, have you experienced or observed any of the following behaviours? (please select all that apply)

	Experienced	Observed	Neither
Sexual/sexist teasing, jokes, remarks or questions			
Pressure for dating			
Sexual/sexist letters, phone calls, emails			
Leaning over, cornering, pinching, touching, unwanted physical contact			
Pressure for sexual favours			
Stalking			
Physical/sexual assault			

5.2 If you experienced any of these behaviours, did you seek advice/support* from any of the following in your institution?

- Colleague
- Dignity and Respect Contact Person
- HR staff
- Union representative
- Other (please specify) *[Dialogue box]*

If so, what effect did it have?

- Felt better
- Felt worse
- Behavior decreased
- Behavior stopped
- Behavior increased
- Made no difference
- N/A

* If you think you are victim of sexual harassment or other forms of violence, do not hesitate to speak to an HR officer, College Health Centre, Staff Employment Assistance Programme or a trade union representative.

5.3 In your current working environment, have you experienced or observed bullying ** from: *[Yes/No buttons for each]*

- Manager
- Colleague
- Student

5.4 If you experienced any of these behaviours, did you seek advice/support*** from any of the following in your institution?

- Colleague
- Dignity and Respect Contact Person
- HR staff
- Union representative
- Other (please specify) *[Dialogue box]*

If so, what effect did it have? If so, what effect did it have?

- Felt better
- Felt worse
- Behavior decreased
- Behavior stopped
- Behavior increased
- Made no difference
- N/A

** Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work/study and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity and respect.

*** If you think you are victim of bullying, do not hesitate to speak to an HR officer, College Health Centre, Staff Employment Assistance Programme or a trade union representative.

Section 6: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

6.1 What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other (please specify) *[Dialogue box]*

6.2 What is your age?

- Under 30 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- Over 60 years

6.3 Do you have a partner (same or opposite sex) or spouse?

- Yes
- No

6.4 Is your partner/spouse currently employed?

- Yes - full-time
- Yes - part-time
- No

6.5 Does your partner/spouse currently work in academia?

- Yes – same/related discipline
- Yes – other discipline
- No – works outside academia

6.6 Do you have caring responsibilities for dependent children and/or adults?

- Yes
- No

If YES, please select all that apply and indicate how many dependent children and/or adults you care for:

- Yes – children aged under 6 *[select number]*
- Yes – children aged between 6-18 *[select number]*
- Yes – dependent young adults living at home *[select number]*
- Yes - adult dependents (e.g. partner, parents) *[select number]*

6.7 Which Faculty do you currently work in (if interdisciplinary, please select the two most relevant)?

- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
- Engineering, Mathematics and Science
- Health Sciences
- Other (please specify)

6.8 Which School do you currently work in?

[Drop down list]

6.9 If you have any additional comments about this survey and/or the topics covered, please add them here

[Dialogue box]

You have reached the end of the survey.

You can choose not to submit this form. Simply exit without pressing the 'Done' button. If you do so, all the information you put in will be deleted.

Many thanks for your time!