

Ireland – Executive summary of the National Report WP 2.6

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the EDIFY EDU European Project Work Package 2, which aims to address the skills gap in the Business Management education sector regarding competencies on workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The report provides an overview of the history and evolution of business management education, tracing its roots to classical management theory and scientific management. It also analyses the placement, or lack thereof, of EDI in the curriculum and its effects on the labour market and gender.

Despite globalisation and advances in the way of doing business, undergraduate business management education continues to perpetuate labour market segregation and discrimination based on gender and other intersectionalities. The report compares the proposed European educational competency frameworks, the European framework for the personal, social and learning to learn key competence (LifeComp), the European entrepreneurship competence framework (EntreComp), and the digital competence framework for citizens (DigComp) to competencies in undergraduate business management courses in Ireland and explores the current labour market, including a gender gap analysis. It examines the experiences of students and professionals in the workplace and EDI in undergraduate business education.

Furthermore, the report provides insights into the social impact of existing and emerging labour market laws and policies and discusses the discrepancies between current policies and practices. For instance, Ireland's labour market profile shows a gender imbalance in the workplace, with women underrepresented in senior management roles and on boards. According to the Gender Balance in Business Survey from 2021, only 22% of members of Boards of Directors were female. Women continue to experience significant barriers in employment, particularly in leadership roles. Furthermore, the report highlights the need for an improved undergraduate business education, as outlined by the European Commission, that takes into consideration equality, diversity, and inclusion and can contribute to alleviating existing gendered labour market and workplace EDI discriminatory practices. It also discusses the gap between undergraduate business management studies and the realities of management practice and the need to move beyond classical management theories to create a more equal, diverse and inclusive future.

The report sets out a recommended list of competencies needed to address EDI issues in the workplace. These competencies are aligned to the European frameworks (EntreComp, LifeComp and DigComp) and should be considered in the design and development of the micro credential modules developed as part of the EDIFY EDU project (Work Package 3), to complement the identified competency gaps.