



The Kate Maher Cup is a speech competition for secondary school students who identify as women or as a gender minority. We accept submissions from students who identify as women and as all gender minorities, including, but not limited to, gender-fluid, non-binary, and trans students. This competition is a safe space for students, and students' genders will not be disclosed to anyone outside this competition.

It involves submitting a video for one of the prompts below.

Winners will be contacted in early March and are invited to Trinity College to present their speech in the iconic Debating Chamber in the Graduates Memorial Building in front of family and friends.

The deadline for submissions is 22nd February 2026.

All questions can be sent to schools@tcdphil.com.

The maximum video length accepted is 7 minutes. For Junior Cycle students we expect speeches to be about 3 minutes, while for Senior Cycle students we expect about 5 minutes.

Only one entry per student is allowed.

All year groups can enter speeches under the general prompts category, and there is an additional specific question for Junior and Senior cycles.

General prompts for all year groups:

What does gender mean to you? *(Students are expected to give a personal speech about their experience of gender and how the concept of gender has influenced their life.)*

Critically analyze a film or piece of literature through the lens of gender. *(This can include criticisms of the portrayal of gender, what if the main character was another gender, etc.)*

Women were first admitted to trinity 120 years ago, that same year the Elizabethan society was founded. In your view how have women's roles changed in the world in the last 120 years?

Do you think there is a universal experience in being a girl?

Junior Cycle Competition: The Eavan Boland Prize

The Eavan Boland Prize honours the life and work of the poet Eavan Boland, a pioneering Irish writer and former student of Trinity College Dublin. She was also the first woman to have a building named after her at Trinity. In her poem "The Pomegranate", Boland explores a mother's struggle as she watches her daughter grow older and become more emotionally distant, reflecting the pain of letting go as a child moves towards independence.

In your opinion, do you think girls today are being forced to grow up too early?

Senior Cycle Competition: The Gráinne Monks Prize

The Eliz was founded in 1905 as a female-only debating society due to the discrimination women at Trinity faced, having been excluded from campus societies. Gráinne Monks, a member of the Eliz, represented a major shift in this power imbalance when she became the first woman elected onto Phil Council in 1968. Women have come a long way since then, highlighted by historic events such as Catherine Connolly's election as Ireland's tenth president and only our third female president last October.

What do you think is the relationship between gender and power? (This prompt is not limited to Ireland, or presidency, and can be interpreted in any way that you see fit)