



Dublin City University
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath

Leadership through Foresight

DCU Strategic Plan

2006 - 2008



In the 25 years since the National Institute for Higher Education in Glasnevin admitted its first students, the educational landscape in Ireland has been transformed. At that time the third level sector was traditional in outlook, and conducted its activities with the help of resources and an infrastructure that was not adequate for a developed country with significant aspirations.

A quarter of a century later much has changed. It is now widely accepted that the knowledge society we seek to become needs strong universities, enterprising academics and students, and world-class facilities. We also know that universities must not only be facilitators of innovation by others, but must themselves be radical change agents.

These roles come naturally to DCU. We pioneered new teaching methods and internships for students; we encouraged interdisciplinarity at all levels from the start; we identified and prioritised focused areas for world class research; we actively recruited and supported students from disadvantaged backgrounds; we saw ourselves as partners with the local community in urban regeneration, and as drivers of cultural renewal. All this was made possible through the dedication of our staff, students and supporters.

In our last strategic plan, *Leading Change*, we continued with our commitment to be drivers of innovation. We became the first university in the world to base our strategic development on the introduction of interdisciplinary Academic Themes, reflecting our strengths, national priorities and our understanding of future needs and opportunities.

This new strategic plan, *Leadership through Foresight*, takes us further along this route and

confirms our determination to be radical and innovative, and to secure the ability and the means to be among the international leaders in our priority areas.

We nurture these intentions not just because we are ambitious, but because we believe that DCU's goals are right for our society and will contribute to the achievement of national goals. We believe that a successful modern country needs a culture of inquiry, enterprise, innovation, tolerance and respect.

DCU seeks to be the university of choice for an Ireland that embraces that culture.

Ferdinand von Prondzynski
President



Strategic intent

The strategic intent of DCU is to be a distinctive agent of radical innovation, within a culture of world class excellence in higher education and scholarship.

Core activity

DCU achieves this by discovering, analysing, expanding, and translating knowledge in teaching and research, and by fostering creativity and spearheading change.

Methodology

DCU identifies intellectual and knowledge needs, opportunities and trends, prioritises them and exercises leadership in the selected priority areas.

Values

DCU's distinctive values are to be:

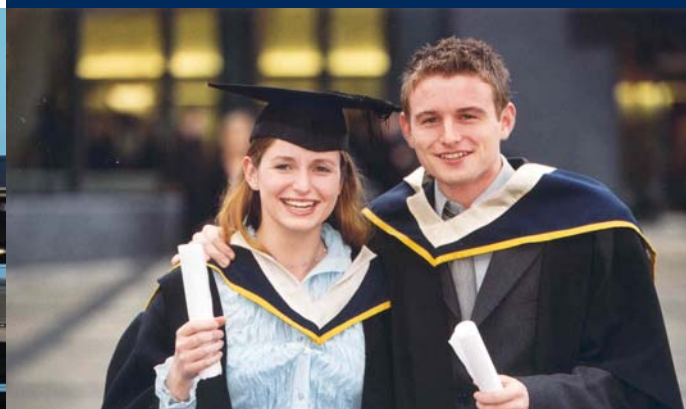
- **Radical and innovative**
- **Collaborative and networked**
- **Accessible and open**
- **Committed to intellectual integrity, objectivity and academic freedom**

DCU is Ireland's youngest university, just 25 years old in November 2005. Our rapid growth and dynamic leadership helped to transform many of the traditional practices and assumptions of higher education. In the early years of the 21st century our ability to lead the way is more essential still as Ireland faces both great opportunities and great risks.

It is widely recognised that universities are critical to Ireland's success, both economically and in terms of the development of an innovative and tolerant society. They should not merely be service providers in education, but national agents of innovation and change. Therefore DCU will contribute to Ireland's social and economic success by promoting a culture of enterprise, calculated risk-taking, technological innovation, ethical awareness, social inclusion and cultural openness.

In this new strategic plan, *Leadership through Foresight*, we are renewing our commitment to this leadership role, and repeating our determination to break moulds and question established patterns that may stand in the way of progress and success.

We will pursue this role in a spirit of partnership and collaboration - but never complacency - and we look forward to working together with friends and partners in Ireland and overseas.



One of the most radical initiatives to come out of the last DCU strategy, *Leading Change*, was the creation of the Academic Themes and the role of Theme Leaders.

Under *Leading Change*, DCU's strategic academic focus has increasingly been framed around this small number of cross-disciplinary strategic themes. The university's colleges, faculties and centres are called upon to contribute to the development of each of the themes, within a quality support infrastructure provided by the service units. As such, the themes provide the framework for continuous cross-disciplinary collaboration, for investment in strategic initiatives, and for developing strategic external partnerships. They provide a window from the external world into the work of the university.

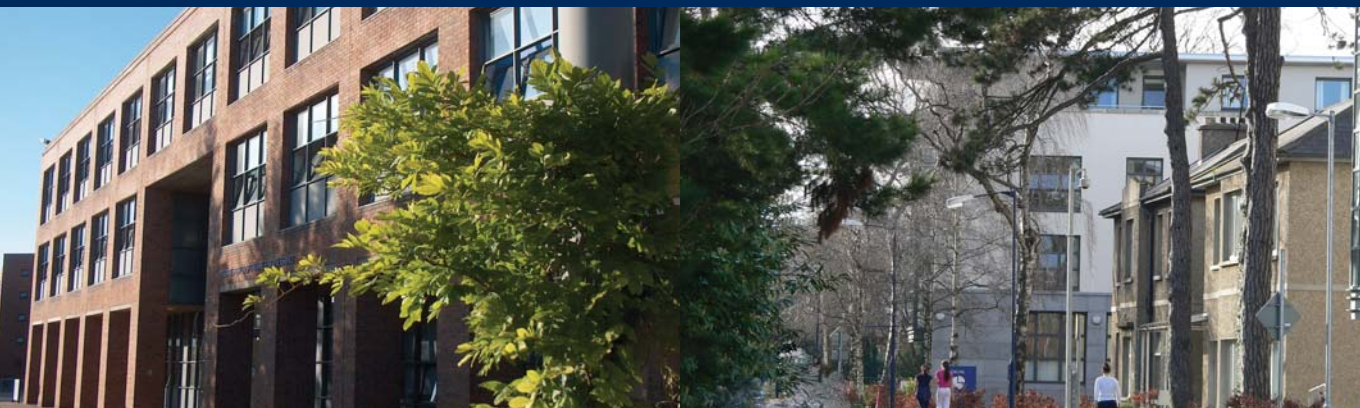
Under *Leadership through Foresight*, this approach to the development of DCU's academic agenda will continue and will gather pace. It is our intention that all the themes will be strategically led and developed through the Theme Leaders and the interdisciplinary groupings, which support them and champion their initiatives.

The Academic Themes are as follows:

- **Business and Innovation**
- **Internationalisation, Interculturalism and Social Development**
- **Science, Discovery and Technological Innovation (SDTI)**
- **Information Technology and the Knowledge Society**
- **Education and Learning**
- **Life Sciences and Health in Society**

The Academic Themes are engines of change, driving a cross-university and interdisciplinary development of DCU.

Their role is also to provoke analysis and change beyond DCU in the life of the country as a whole.



DCU Business School**Faculty of Engineering & Computing**

Computing

Electronic Engineering

Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering

Faculty of Science and Health

Biotechnology

Chemical Sciences

Mathematical Sciences

Nursing

Physical Sciences

Health and Human Performance

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Applied Language & Intercultural Studies

Communications

Education Studies

Fiontar

Law & Government

Oscail***Integration of Strategy***

The Strategy will be integrated across the university with the support of three major component strategies:

- Learning Innovation Strategy
- Research Strategy
- Wider Community Engagement Strategy

Strategic Objective No. 1

DCU will integrate the Academic Themes as drivers of innovation and change with all areas of the university activities consistent with our strategic intent.

In order to give full effect to the DCU strategy, we will **complete the process of the Academic Theme Leader appointments.**

We will update and execute the individual Theme plans in a manner that shapes the university's learning and research agenda.

This will be done in partnership between the Theme Leaders and the Theme Committees for each Theme.

Strategic Objective No. 2

DCU will identify knowledge trends and future national needs and act upon them, for the purpose of leading change in Irish society and the successful translation of knowledge into social and economic benefits.

To enable our continued leadership and support in Ireland's agenda for economic growth and knowledge development in future years, we need to decide now what areas to select for priority investment both for research and for teaching and learning purposes. We shall therefore ensure that by the end of the planning period we have **undertaken a Foresight review of scientific and cultural trends** and have reflected this in our resourcing and operational plans.

We will set up Foresight groups for research and learning innovation made up of internal and international experts.



Strategic Objective No. 3

DCU will continually reinvent the education portfolio to ensure that it is innovative and radical and responds to student needs and strategic national priorities.

We will radically revise and overhaul the **curriculum**, including **assessment methodologies**, and we will actively **retire programmes**.

We will develop a **distinctive DCU student experience** that equips our students to make an outstanding contribution to economic, civic and cultural well-being. We will develop **experiential, extra-curricular and inquiry-led learning**, and support **excellence in teaching**.

We will be the first university in Ireland to introduce a series of **cross-university, thematic modules** in areas such as creativity, internationalisation, social development, and health in society.

We will strengthen our commitment to **lifelong learning**.

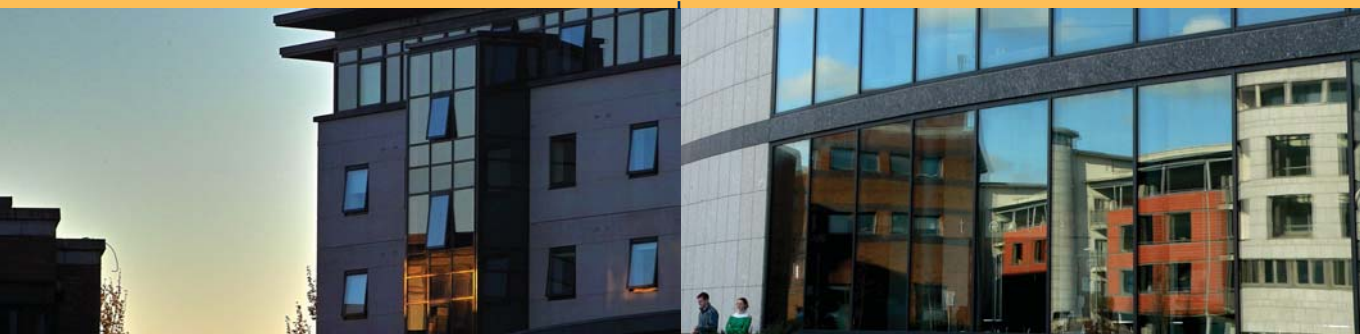
Strategic Objective No. 4

DCU will strengthen its scholarship so as to become an internationally recognised, interdisciplinary, highly focused, research-intensive and collaborative university.

A major requirement for any university claiming world class excellence in priority areas is to be able to draw on a critical mass of **recognised leading experts** to lead projects. We will ensure that by the end of the planning period the number of recognised world experts working in DCU in our priority areas has increased by **at least 20**.

We also need to be able to document excellence in our research and to be honest about areas where further development is needed. We will therefore conduct a **university-wide research assessment programme**.

We will develop a **distinguished visitors programme and support high profile conferences and workshops on the campus**.



Strategic Objective No. 5

DCU will be a leader in the development of Ireland's Fourth Level.

Following the publication of the OECD review of Irish higher education, it is now accepted that significant growth is needed in postgraduate research in Ireland if we are to remain internationally competitive. We will ensure that by the end of the planning period we have **increased postgraduate research student numbers by 20 per cent**, working in key areas of institutional and national priority.

In order to give adequate support to postgraduate students, we will appoint a **Dean of Graduate Studies**.

We will develop comprehensive **postgraduate student training** informed by national needs.

We will develop an **industrial postgraduate internship** programme.

Strategic Objective No. 6

DCU will develop a radical, sustainable and appropriate strategy for revenue growth and integrate its policy and resourcing to reflect its distinctive strategic priorities.

In order to avoid an excessive reliance on public funding, we will ensure that by the end of the planning period **at least 70 per cent** of DCU's total revenues come from sources other than the HEA recurrent grant and HEA-paid fees, and that resources are clearly focused on institutional priorities.

We will develop a **revenue strategy** that delivers upon the strategic objectives of the university through **revenue growth**.



Strategic Objective No. 7

DCU will deepen its commitment to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.

DCU has been a leader in providing access to higher education for disadvantaged students; the DCU access programme was the first in Ireland, and is still the largest. We will ensure that by the end of the planning period **at least 25 per cent** of the DCU student population come from non-traditional groups previously under-represented in higher education.

We will continue to play a leading role in promoting **intercultural awareness and understanding**.

We are also committed to a partnership with government and industry in order to secure R&D investment in Ireland. We will initiate at least two major projects supporting knowledge-intensive economic development with a total value of **at least €50 million**.

Strategic Objective No. 8

DCU will secure a small number of strategic alliances with national and international partners.

In order to draw on a wider range of expertise and achieve critical mass for research and teaching projects, we need to have strategic partners in higher education and other relevant organisations. We will ensure that by the end of the planning period we have entered into a **strategic alliance** with one or more higher education institutions (in Ireland or overseas) and one or more business or voluntary organisations.

We will benchmark DCU against these strategic partners in both academic and non-academic areas.

We will seek at least three joint research funding projects with these partners.



Life at DCU



DCU is where students become who they want to become and achieve what they want to achieve. As well as offering one of the best education systems in Europe, DCU offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities.

Sports



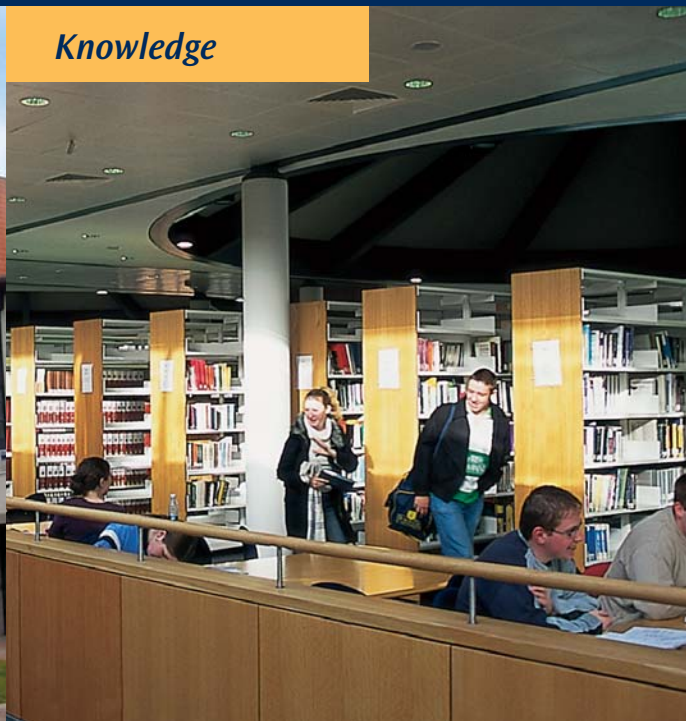
DCU is committed to promoting sport on campus as a means of encouraging a holistic approach to student life. A custom-built sports centre and a talented athlete programme demonstrate this commitment.

Enterprise



*DCU's Revenue Strategy will link with our Commercialisation Strategy, which is driven through the enterprise and innovation centre of DCU, **Invent**.*

Knowledge

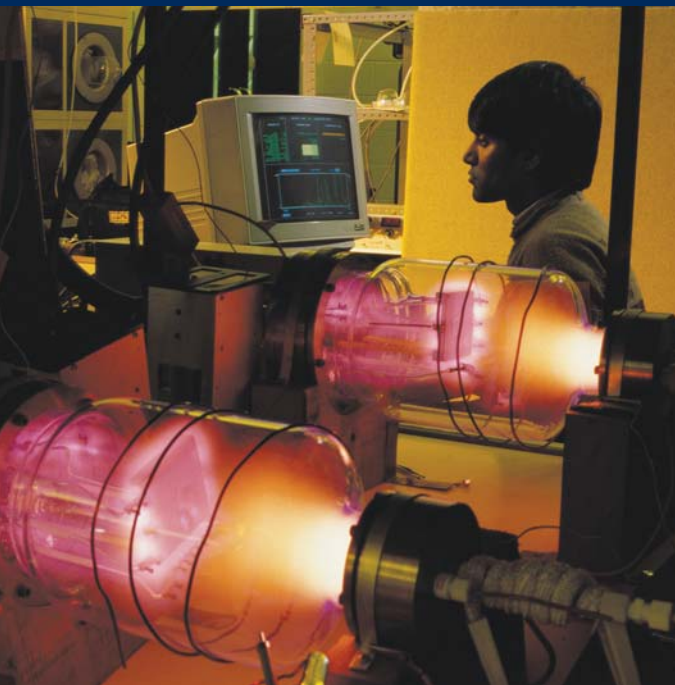


We are committed to the development of knowledge resources, including our landmark library. Innovative application of ICT will be used as a catalyst for change that will contribute greatly to the success and uniqueness of DCU.

Creating the Intercultural Campus



DCU is taking a leading role in analysing and developing best practice in relation to the growing importance of migration and social integration in contemporary Ireland. We will make DCU itself an example of a truly intercultural workplace through the Intercultural Campus Initiative as part of the Wider Community Engagement Strategy. The university is also committed to the development of the Irish language as a medium of innovation in a culturally diverse Europe.



DCU and Internationalisation



DCU is currently pursuing an ambitious internationalisation strategy, which will extend for many years to come. Amongst our main priorities are the diversification of our student body, active research links with top-class universities worldwide and staff exchange. This strategy effects all faculties across the university and is being actively promoted by senior management, the faculties and schools and further supported by the recently expanded international office.

Dublin City University
Dublin 9
Ireland

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Baile Átha Cliath 9
Éire

Tel +353 (0) 1 700 5000
Fax +353 (0) 1 836 0830
www.dcu.ie

Photographs by Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski, President, DCU and Marie Leahy, Public Affairs and Media Relations Office, DCU

