

Dublin City University
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath



Leading through Challenge
University Strategy 2009-2011

Leading through Challenge 2009 - 2011

Internationalisation Strategy

Welcome

Dublin City University has identified internationalisation as an important strand in its overall corporate strategy – and a crucial element of its development into the future.

While DCU has, from the outset, engaged in international activities at all levels and has welcomed international staff and students to our campus, the development of this strategy has afforded us the opportunity to examine and define what internationalisation means in practice for DCU and how we intend to develop this in the coming years.

This strategy would not have been possible without the active involvement of a large representative group of staff and students from across faculties, schools, research and support units. The group met on numerous occasions and I would like to thank all who contributed to the development of this strategy in so many ways. In the course of this work, a number of key members of staff were interviewed with a view to helping the group establish priorities. This included meetings with the Deputy President, the Vice-President for Learning Innovation and the Vice-President for Research and Theme Leader for Internationalisation, Interculturalism and Social Development. I would in particular like to thank the staff members of the International Office, who have worked consistently to support internationalisation on a day-to-day basis.

To ensure that DCU's internationalisation strategy would benefit from the insight and perspective of external stakeholders and experts in the field of internationalisation, an external advisory panel was formed. This panel met to review our draft objectives at the early stages of the process, and their contribution was very valuable.

Through the implementation of this strategy, we wish to embed an international, intercultural dimension into all DCU functions and activities, while providing unrivalled support to our international students and help all DCU students to gain truly global competences.

Marie Heraughty
Head of International Affairs
Dublin City University

Introduction

In March 2009, 19% of DCU's student body at undergraduate and postgraduate level was made up of international students from over 110 countries. The diversity of the student population reflects the changes that have occurred over recent decades in Irish society, particularly the immigration trends, and also highlights the increased activity in international recruitment on the part of DCU.

DCU currently has over 500 arrangements with colleges and universities in other countries and 160 Erasmus Exchange agreements, catering for both staff and students.

The diversity of the student body and the broad network of partners worldwide is an ideal basis on which to build a university-wide internationalisation agenda, which infiltrates all aspects of academic life in the University.

From the outset of this strategy, it became clear that the following aspects of internationalisation were of key importance to the University:

- Fostering a deep appreciation of internationalisation and its benefits within DCU
- Promoting a sense of global citizenship among DCU students, maximizing the opportunities afforded by the presence of international students on campus and equipping all DCU students with international competences
- Recruiting international undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students to ensure a spread of international students across all programmes and aligned with strategic research interests of DCU.
- Providing an excellent student experience for international students from application stage to graduation through the provision of high standards of service
- DCU should continue to develop partnerships at all levels including a limited number of strategic international higher education partners to support recruitment, research and benchmarking.

These elements were incorporated into the final document.

Environment

Given the diversity of students on taught under- and postgraduate programmes at DCU, the extent of our international linkages and student exchange opportunities, and the high number of international students engaged in research at DCU (41%), the University is extremely well positioned to embed internationalisation into its daily activities and medium- to long-term strategy.

The period which this Strategy covers is, however, also a challenging one for the development of a strong internationalisation strategy. International student recruitment will, undoubtedly, be more challenging at a time when securing funding may be an issue for international students and the opportunities for employment in Ireland upon graduation become less certain. DCU students may shy away from exchange opportunities if funding is not available for this option. Other issues such as the lack of presence of 'Ireland Inc.' on the international education stage, student visa

delays and intense competitiveness from countries such as the UK, the USA and Australia will also need to be carefully monitored,

Decreasing costs of living, an excellent university education system and the English-speaking environment will factor in our favour, however – these, and other sources of competitive advantage will assist us in our endeavours in the coming years.

Strategic Intent

To develop the internationalisation agenda in the University in such a way that it infiltrates all elements of life at DCU

This will be done by:

- Developing and building on our Strategic Alliances with reputable institutions, including Arizona State University, with a view to forming a global web of suitable partners
- Continuing to develop a diverse student population, ensuring the student mix remains well-balanced
- Creating a unique student experience for international students from the moment of enquiry through to graduation and beyond
- Supporting international learning through internationalisation-at-home and overseas experiences
- Providing training and support for staff to work effectively with – and learn from - students from different cultural and academic backgrounds
- Developing an effective international student recruitment strategy which ensures high quality students across all disciplines and levels of study

Guiding Principles

Vision

DCU concurs with the vision that internationalisation is comprised of five interlocking dimensions of curriculum, partners, staff, students and alumni and research and that internationalisation transcends the boundaries of DCU campus by active engagement with the local community. It is DCU's intention to become a highly respected provider of international education, preparing students to engage in and contribute to a changing world through developing intercultural and global awareness, knowledge and skills and providing students with international learning opportunities while at DCU and the chance to participate in overseas learning and education programmes.

Foresight

Foresight provides a valuable framework which will allow us to identify potential key target markets and to identify broad parameters for the development of a far-reaching internationalisation strategy.

DCU Internationalisation- Strategic Objectives

Developing the Global Citizen

DCU will foster internationalisation as a key element of the DCU student experience, promoting an appreciation of the global citizen and embedding internationalisation as a fundamental element of the student learning experience.

Enhancing International Recruitment

DCU will continue to position itself as a leading Irish institution for international students, increasing the number of international students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. It will further enhance its reputation for excellence for international study abroad and exchange students.

Delivering on the International Student Experience

DCU will deliver support services and initiatives specific to the needs of international students with a view to enriching all aspects of the student experience at DCU

Strong International Partnerships

DCU will continue to build and strengthen relationships with international partners, developing strong and mutually beneficial alliances to support recruitment, research and the staff and student experience

Objective 1: Developing the Global Citizen

- 1.1 Identify criteria to allow DCU to define the level of current international and intercultural content within the programme curricula in DCU
- 1.2 Based on defined criteria, increasing the exposure to learning outcomes which will include an international dimension with a view to placing a clear value on intercultural awareness and skill development.
- 1.3 Deliver an intercultural and international element to the student personal and professional development programme offered by SS&D.
- 1.4 Increase the number of DCU students who are participating in out-going international exchanges
- 1.5 Develop opportunities for research students to engage in research outside of Ireland as part of their PhD programme
- 1.6 Deliver a programme to assist staff with skills in working in an intercultural environment, including examining the possibility of intercultural awareness training as part of staff induction.

Objective 2: Enhancing International Recruitment

- 2.1 Develop an effective strategy for student recruitment, focusing on strategically identified key markets and return on investment.
- 2.2 Establish and lead a cross-university international recruitment body to ensure co-ordination of effort in international recruitment and efficiencies in the system
- 2.3 Review the entire international student application procedure, including method of assessment, support for visa applications, pre-arrival support. Develop CRM system to enhance this experience.
- 2.4 Develop DCU offerings and programmes designed to increase the number of study abroad students at DCU
- 2.5 Establish a recruitment office internationally. Maximise the potential of International Agents in key markets
- 2.6 Develop the alumni international network and extend international alumni ambassadors to support recruitment in target countries.
- 2.7 Offer DCU scholarships with a view to attracting high-quality students and increasing the visibility of DCU internationally
- 2.8 Develop CRM capabilities with a view to maximizing efficiencies of recruitment activities

Objective 3: Delivering on the International Student Experience

- 3.1 Enhance the current international orientation model to include a pre-arrival programme with language & academic support elements where appropriate
- 3.2 Develop a full range of student support offerings to facilitate and support students arriving in Ireland for the purposes of study at DCU and incorporate into existing initiatives for First Year students offered by SS&D
- 3.3 Develop effective initiatives for academic English language support services for international students requiring support
- 3.4 Develop an understanding of international student needs through publication of staff guidelines on dealing with interculturalism in the classroom and for student-focused administration
- 3.5 Ensure that the DCU Student Charter takes the diverse student population into consideration at all times
- 3.6 Develop Initiatives to engage international students fully with DCU student life, including international student representation in the Students' Union, promoting increased participation by international students in clubs and societies
- 3.7 Create a Retention and Progression Plan, building on the SS&D model, including a plan for international student academic preparation programme
- 3.8 Implement an appropriate CRM system to support one-to-one student support

Objective 4: Strong International Partnerships

- 4.1 DCU will use clearly defined criteria based on strategic priorities in pursuing and forming new international partnerships and strategic alliances.
- 4.2 Deepen strategic relationship with ASU and identify other partners for strategic alliances based on criteria and strategic fit
- 4.3 DCU will partner with an international partner in an emerging economy with a particular focus on Africa, as an international element of its civic engagement strategy

Academic Themes

This strategy is clearly interlinked with the theme of Internationalisation, Interculturalism and Social Development. The implementation of the strategy will focus on the embedding of internationalisation across the DCU community and engage with the local community through programmes such as that of the 'Host Family Volunteer Programme' and other programmes under civic engagement.

Student Experience

Today's graduates must be prepared for life and work in a globalised world where they have a deep understanding and respect for social, cultural and ethnic differences. DCU students will be encouraged and supported in their endeavours to find appropriate opportunities to take part in international experiences, be they on the home campus or overseas. Further internationalisation of the teaching curriculum should provide DCU graduates with the skills necessary to operate effectively in the global environment and to engage effectively in cooperative learning.

International students come in contact with DCU from practically every corner of the globe. Many of the initiatives emerging from this Strategy are aimed at ensuring that the international student experience at the University is academically, professionally and personally of the highest quality.

In tandem with the Student Support and Development Strategy, the Internationalisation Strategy purports to ensure that students are provided with the necessary supports and developmental opportunities to benefit fully from the opportunities afforded them at DCU. .

Staff Experience

In the coming years, staff at DCU will enjoy the benefits of a more comprehensive and transparent system of internationalisation. Cross-university collaboration on international initiatives will build efficiencies and allow increased activity on the global stage; increased support systems for international students will allow international students progress more satisfactorily in their academic studies and hence contribute more fully to their academic fields of study; developments in international strategic links will offer more staff mobility and hence the possibility of self development.

Summary

Since its inception, DCU has fostered links with international institutions both at home and worldwide. The University has developed rapidly in recent years, with international activities such as student and staff exchanges, international student recruitment, research initiatives, inter-university linkages, growing at an impressive rate. Through the consolidation of our international activities within the University, DCU can look forward to making an even stronger impact on the world stage and hence positively impact the reputation of Irish education abroad.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Members of the Internal Working Group and External Advisory Panel

Members of the Internal Working Group

Claire Bohan
Sylvia Schroeder
Maria Slowey
Ronnie Munck
Eamonn Cuggy
Brendan Gillen
Celine Jameson
Cathal Maye
Tanya Keogh
Gerard Kiely
Niall McClave
Eithne Guilfoyle
Bernard Pierce
Laurent Muzellec
Eugene Kennedy
Malcolm Smyth
Seamus Fox
Jean Clarke
Paul Smith

Members of the External Advisory Panel

Professor David Law, Edgehill
Helen Dixon, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

William O’Gorman, Department of Justice
Terry McPartland, Enterprise Ireland
Sheila Power, ICOS
Don O’Neill, CIEE
Andrew Tallon GNIB
John Lynch, Education Ireland
Seamus O Conghaile, DE&S

Appendix B:

Meeting notes