

## DCU in the Community: Strategic Plan 2013-17

<b>Strategic mission</b>	<i>Social regeneration through education</i>
<b>Strategic parameters</b>	<p><b>National Strategy for Higher Education to 2020</b>  “Links between higher education institutions and their local communities include educational, cultural, sports-related and civic activities, and support for Irish-language development activities. Over the coming decades, these links and activities will be strengthened, extended and formalised, and (where this is not already the case) they will be recognised as part of the strategic mission of the institution. The relationship between the institution and the community is particularly important in the context of the promotion and achievement of greater equality in higher education”.</p> <p><b>Local government and community development realignment</b>  DCU in the Community also notes the recently initiated local governance reform process. The resulting redrawing of municipal boundaries, incorporation of regeneration agencies and review of the Local Community Development Programme have the potential to have a very significant impact on the work of DCU in the Community. These policy changes will be reviewed on an on-going basis and addressed appropriately.</p> <p><b>DCU Strategic Plan 2012-17 Transforming Lives and Societies</b>  “Engagement is a cornerstone of DCU’s uniqueness. We are the antithesis of the ‘Ivory Tower’ university... Dublin is our city and we aim to be a key contributor in enhancing its position... DCU is also rooted proudly in its North Dublin neighbourhood. We are committed to working with community, educational, commercial and social groups in our region ... to play a positive role in the development of the local social and economic fabric”</p>
<b>Strategic enablers</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing strong strategic partnerships with DCU units, staff and students to maximise and target community engagement in the areas of lifelong-learning, community based learning, community based research and student volunteering.</li> <li>2. Developing durable strategic partnerships with local community organisations and educational providers to enhance the impact of DCU in the Community to mutual benefit.</li> <li>3. Developing with DCU units and community partners a sustainable plan to enable delivery of the strategic objectives of DCU in the Community in pursuit of its overall mission of ‘social regeneration through education’</li> </ol>
<b>Strategic objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To widen access to and participation in third level education for marginalised adult learners and mature students through the provision of appropriately designed and accredited learning programmes;</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To develop experiential community based learning pathways for DCU students in association with university and community partners;</li> <li>3. To facilitate research partnerships between DCU units and community organisations through support for DCU’s Community Knowledge Exchange;</li> <li>4. To develop a local student/staff volunteering system in association with DCU volunteering staff and community partners; to facilitate volunteering and student led civic engagement through the national platform for civic engagement, Campus Engage</li> </ol> <p>Note:</p> <p>DCU in the Community has already established itself in terms of Objectives 1 and 2. Over 400 course places have been taken by local adult learners since re-opening in 2010, and demand for new courses, as well as the aspiration to progress to further and higher education, remains strong. In relation to Objective 3 Community Knowledge Exchange has recently been established to promote research partnerships between academia and the community and has enjoyed lively interest since its launch. As to Objective 4 DCU student engagement in volunteering and community based learning locally has increased and through our role in Campus Engage we can lever in resources to systematise existing provision. Our assessment of the data is that Objectives 1 and 2 build on proven success and that we can build on Objectives 3 and 4 with new partners within our existing human and financial resources.</p>
<p><b>Strategic KPIs</b></p>	<p><b><i>Objective 1: Pathways to University</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Explore <b>accreditation routes and alliances</b> for the delivery of learning programmes for increased and accelerated access into DCU courses for programme graduates</li> <li>b. Annual delivery and expansion of the core <b>‘Bridge to Higher Education’</b> programme to 100 participants</li> <li>c. Increase in <b>progression to further and higher education</b> among participants to 25%, to include mature entry and other non-traditional routes</li> <li>d. Increased suite of both <b>informal and accredited educational workshops, courses and events</b> responsive to identified learner and employment needs designed and delivered in collaboration with community based providers and DCU Schools &amp; Faculties</li> </ol> <p><b><i>Objective 2: Community Based Learning/Service Learning</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Compile a <b>university community based learning directory</b> in collaboration with the DCU units and faculties identifying potential opportunities for student service learning placements in community partners</li> <li>b. Identify and promote experiential <b>community based learning pathways</b> for DCU students in association with university and community partners</li> <li>c. Promotion and delivery of <b>community based learning training events</b> jointly with DCU Units and Schools</li> </ol>

***Objective 3: Community Based Research***

- a. Facilitation and support for community organisations to engage with the DCU **Community Knowledge Exchange** initiative
- b. Dissemination of best practise in community based and participatory research via contribution to the **annual research summer school, training events and capacity building**
- c. Promotion of **Community Based Research training events** to be offered as part of standard university research methodology courses and in community based organisations
- d. Advocacy for a **clear system of recognition** for academics doing community engaged research and the parallel development of professional development opportunities for staff to enable involvement in community based research
- e. Conducting a **community profiling and mapping project** as part of Innovate Ballymun

***Objective 4: Student/Staff Volunteering***

- a. Compilation of a **local directory of community engagement and volunteering needs** based on consultation with community based organisations
- b. Increased collaboration with community organisations, and DCU units to **strengthen university based channels and promote and facilitate volunteering opportunities**
- c. Identification of, and advocacy through the Office of Civic Engagement, of university recruitment, promotion and award processes to provide **incentives for student body, academic and administrative staff in volunteering**
- d. Assist in the creation of a **national student volunteering system and database** in association with Campus Engage

***The above Objectives will be underpinned by:***

- a. Recognition and inclusion of community partners as equal partners with particular expertise though experience
- b. Continued investment in developing and maintaining networks of collaborative relationships between DCU, community leaders and community based organisations
- c. Identification of innovative, mutually beneficial university-community educational initiatives and project management support or referral
- d. Increase in community-university educational events on and off campus to promote meaningful exchange in response to identified needs
- e. Development and delivery of a university-wide academic module on Citizenship and Engagement
- f. Continued leadership to drive the national platform for civic engagement, the Campus Engage network
- g. Increase in communication and promotion of the activities of DCU in the Community via social and print media, and internal university channels