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DCU in the Community

DCU in the Community acts as a bridge between the university - its staff, students and resources - and the local and regional community. Our mission is to promote social regeneration through education and enhance local community development and community resilience through the provision of flexible educational and lifelong learning opportunities.

We also aim to promote and embed civic engagement activities in DCU and in higher education sector in Ireland through our work with Campus Engage. DCU in the Community staff are active members of the Campus Engage Student Volunteering Working Group, and Community-Based Learning/Community-Based Research Working Group, as well as DCU’s Civic Engagement Forum.

DCU in the Community is the flagship and most tangible expression of DCU’s commitment to civic engagement. Our activities include:

- Adult education and lifelong learning
- Widening access and participation
- Student volunteering
- Community-based learning and research
- Community engagement
2016-2017 in a Snapshot

- 150+ learners across all programmes
- 160+ hours of educational guidance, student support and mentoring
- Assistance with 20+ applications to higher and further education
- 9 courses delivered on site; additionally, hosted 3 courses for community partners
- 8 workshops delivered during Summer School 2018
- 160+ students registered on www.studentvolunteer.ie bringing the total number of DCU student volunteers registered on the system to 350
- 100+ student volunteer opportunities applied for via www.studentvolunteer.ie
- 120+ DCU students attended Volunteer Helpdesk in Semester 2
- Delivered a 2-week training in community-based learning at Ho Chi Minh City University of Science, under Irish Aid funded programme, for over 80 participants
Educational Programmes

Overall, more than 150 learners participated in all courses and programmes at DCU in the Community in the academic year 2017/2018, including 44 students who took up almost 80 workshop places during Summer School in July 2018.
Many of the programmes were held in partnership with local community organisations and statutory providers and majority are QQI accredited.

In 2017/2018 academic year, DCU in the Community also provided venue, equipment and administrative support for courses delivered by other community providers: Ballymun Job Centre, An Cosan Virtual Community College and Ballymun Youth Action Project.

— Our courses are designed to build confidence and study skills to return to education; however, we welcome community learners with varied motivations - personal development, career preparation, enhancing CV, lifelong learners, CE participants, those who wish to progress to third level
— We offer educational and career guidance, study supports and mentoring to students to encourage them to commit to learning and prepare for further education or future career.
— We start with where people are at – in their life stage, educational, professional and personal journey and offer stepping stones to progression
— We teach in small classes and groups, in a friendly and welcoming environment. Our centre is a community-based centre and we especially welcome people from the local neighbourhoods
— We recognise the individual talents of each learner and offer a flexible curriculum based on our learners’ needs, motivations and ambitions
— Jointly with our learners, we map out learning and career paths in simple steps, offering progression routes and timescales to suit their lifestyles and family commitments
— We assess and review learners’ goals against their progress and develop tailored learning supports for each student who wants to avail of these
Bridge to Education (QQI Level 5)
Our Bridge to Education programme is aimed at mature students and adult learners who wish to prepare to return to further and higher education. The programme is accredited at QQI Level 5.

Areas of study include communications, academic reading and writing, numeracy and computer skills for college, research and study skills, as well as ongoing guidance.

The programme is linked with DCU Campus through tours, guest workshops, speakers and events.

In 2017/2018 the programme was delivered twice for 25 learners.

Bridge to Education course is delivered jointly with Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA) and Sillogue Neighbourhood Centre.

Psychology (QQI Level 5)
Our Psychology course aims to equip participants with introductory understanding of psychology as a field of academic study.

The focus is on linking the theory of psychology to practical applications, such as therapies and interventions associated with the major psychological perspectives.

The programme has been designed with the assistance of experts from DCU BSc Psychology degree, and is linked with DCU Campus through guest speaker workshops and on campus events.

In 2017/2018 the programme was delivered twice for nearly 30 learners.

The course is delivered in partnership with Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA) and Sillogue Neighbourhood Centre.

Community Organisation Management (QQI Level 6)
The Community Organisation Management course (new for 2017/2018) gives participants an insight into the theory and practice of management and leadership in community organisations with a strong focus on developing leadership capacity.

It is designed to support those currently employed or volunteering within the community sector and who are looking to progress to managerial roles.

A number of guest speakers have delivered talks on the programme from organisations such as Dublin North West Area Partnership, Northside Partnership, Rediscovery Centre, Sillogue Neighbourhood Centre, Ballymun Youth Action Project, Ballymun Child and Family resource Centre, Ballymun Law Centre, BRYR, Carmichael Centre, and Axis Ballymun.

In 2017/2018 the programme was delivered twice for 25 learners.

The course is delivered in partnership with Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA) and Sillogue Neighbourhood Centre.

Creative Digital Media iMac
DCU in the Community has established itself as a state of the art digital media hub. This interactive course is designed for learners who are interested in developing their digital media skills for personal and professional purposes.

Students gain knowledge of using iMac computers and Apple software and applications for creating and editing audio-visual materials, such as slideshows, movies and websites. The course introduces participants to the basics of working with software and applications such as Wix, Picasa, iMovie, Audacity and Google Tools.
In 2017/2018, one programme was delivered for over 10 learners many of whom are employees of local community groups and organisations.

**Summer School**

Held since 2011, DCU in the Community Summer School is designed to bring university and community experts together to deliver sessions and workshops for local residents of all ages.

For DCU in the Community, it is an opportunity to reach new student groups and introduce them to our activities.

In July 2018, 8 workshops were delivered in areas of professional, career and personal development, psychology, wellbeing, workplace communications, and digital media.

DCU in the Community would like to acknowledge and thank DCU School of Nursing and Human Sciences, DCU Marketing and DCU Counselling Service whose contribution of valuable time and expertise made it possible to facilitate such a successful Summer School programme.

Over 40 participants took 80 workshop places available in July 2018.

**Boxing Clever**

Boxing Clever is a 20–week programme aimed to promote recovery and rehabilitation of marginalised and socially excluded groups through a framework of adult education, addiction awareness and education, counselling, guidance and physical activity (boxercise and boxing).

The programme is led by HSE RIS, Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force, Ballymun Youth Action Project and Urrús, and supported by DCC.

DCU in the Community has supported the delivery of the programme since 2012.

In 2018, DCU in the Community supported approx. twelve programme participants through the provision of structured study skills and assignment preparation sessions and provided the venue for the QQI L4 Health-Related Fitness module.

**Other Programmes and Venue Provision**

— In 2018, DCU in the Community partnered with An Cosán Virtual Community College and Dublin North West Area Partnership on the delivery of Community Leadership programme. DCU in the Community hosted the 6-week programme and provided IT equipment for classes.

— Digital Media and Digital Photography programmes – led and organised by Ballymun Job Centre Men’s Group and held at DCU in the Community weekly throughout the academic year.

— FIT Beginner Computer programme – led and organised by Ballymun Job Centre Men’s Group and held at DCU in the Community in June – July 2018.
Educational Guidance

DCU in the Community provides a range of pre-entry mentoring and support services for students enrolled on in-house courses as well as external clients through outreach talks, covering topics such as study support, educational guidance, application assistance, finance application assistance, interview preparation and more. In 2017/2018, 160 hours of educational guidance, mentoring and study support were delivered.

In 2017/2018, DCU in the Community also provided one-to-one, hands-on assistance with completing over 20 further and higher education applications to in-house students and external clients and a similar number of applications for student financial supports, such as SUSI grants and Back to Education Allowance.

Campus events for our community students were also organised in 2017/2018 and have included;

— Mature students information sessions with DCU Mature Students Office
— DCU Campus Tours with DCU Student Recruitment Office
— DCU Library Tours and Workshops with DCU Library
— Academic writing skills workshops with DCU Student Learning
— BSc Psychology talks with academic staff and mature students from the programme
— Research ethics seminars

DCU in the Community would like to thank all staff from the offices and units for their assistance on the delivery of our programmes.

An annual Graduation Ceremony was held on 13th July 2018 in the Mentoring Suite at DCU Library.
DCU Volunteer - Student Volunteering

2017/2018 academic year was another year of significant increase in student volunteering activity at DCU thanks to a number of initiatives managed by DCU Volunteer.

— **Student Orientation:** Orientation Talks on student volunteering reaching nearly 4,000 incoming students to DCU during September 2017, along with the distribution of 4,000+ DCU Student Volunteering Handbooks within Student Orientation Packs
— **Volunteer Fair 2017:** September 2017, Glasnevin Campus - 50 community organisations and civic/charitable student societies attended with footfall of just under 600 and coverage from SU promotion and College View piece
— **International Day of Volunteering:** December 2017 - celebration of DCU volunteers which included HeadstARTS Christmas Showcase, Second Scoop and RAG’s GoGAGA
— **DCU Volunteer Working Group:** set up of collective working group made up of delegates from charitable and civic societies in DCU, with 10 members in total and 2 staff representatives. The Group meet once a month to discuss civic engagement from student perspective
— **Fundraising Events:** Daffodil Day and Irish Cancer Society Fundraising Event held in February and March 2018 in conjunction with SU, organised with DCU Volunteer Working Group in attended by 300+ students and raised over €1000 for the Irish Cancer Society
— **Once-Off Voluntary Projects:** Community Garden Project, Adopt a Street Clean-Up, Shoe-Box Appeal and Darkness into Light
— **Volunteer Helpdesk:** held once a week in Semester 2 in conjunction with DCUSU
— **Organisation & Community Group Links:** Collaborated and partnered with over 20 community organisations this year including Inner City Helping Homeless, WALK, The Hope Foundation, GiveBack.ie, Localise
— **DCU Volunteer Newsletter:** Sent out weekly during Semester 2 to student body of 17,000
— **Bank Of Ireland & DCU in the Community Projects:** a 7-week Ballymun Kickham’s Grind Program held in Semester 2 with 11 Ballymun Kickham students and 10 DCU student volunteers
— **Volunteer Profiles:** Series of blog posts and social media posts encapsulating the stories of past and present student volunteers of DCU
— **Social Media Growth:** steep and significant increase in followers, impressions and interactions
Community Based Learning

In 2017, DCU in the Community partnered with Ho Chi Minh City University of Science on a successful bid as part of the Irish Aid funded Vietnam Ireland Bilateral Education Exchange (VIBE) programme. The two-year project entitled Embedding Community-Based Learning (Service Learning) in STEM Education focuses on developing an innovative community-based learning methodology for STEM subjects in Vietnam to support social and economic development.

In 2018, the Irish team comprising of DCU’s Prof Ronnie Munck, Joanna Ozarowska and Ruth Lynam, with DIT’s Dr Vanessa Murphy, has with support from Campus Engage Ireland, designed and delivered a two-week training programme in civic engagement and community-engaged pedagogies for Vietnamese university lecturers and managers, primary and secondary school teachers as well as university students. Over 80 participants availed of the training which was held at University of Science, Ho Chi Minh City.
The 2018 DCU President’s Awards for Engagement

The 2018 DCU President’s Awards for Engagement were presented in April 2018 at the Helix by DCU President Professor Brian MacCraith. The special invited guest speaker at the ceremony was Darren Ryan, CEO of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland.

The 2018 Award winners were:

— **Winner Staff Category:** Dr Briege Casey, School of Nursing and Human Sciences: for her work in the areas of homelessness, poverty, substance misuse, intellectual disability, art and creativity and in particular leading on the Certificate in Homeless Prevention, Object Poverty exhibition and Love Loss Life project

— **Special Merit Award Staff Category:** Dr Mary Rose Sweeney and Prof Theresa Burke, School of Nursing and Human Sciences: for leading the whole-university, multi-campus research activities laying foundations for and informing the designation of DCU as the world’s first Autism Friendly University

— **Winner Student Category:** Ornella Nana, MSc International Relations: for her work as a youth advocate and in youth empowerment, for educating young people on sustainable development goals and wide-ranging public engagement

— **Special Merit Award Student Category:** Biological Research Society: for their student driven, creative and fun science promotion activities and workshops for young people and children linking in with the Aisling Project, Ballymun

— **Special Award for Enterprise Engagement:** Prof Deirdre Butler, School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies for her work in the development and engagement of “Smart Partnerships” to develop STEM competencies and multiple initiatives in the area of STEM education
Our Team

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