



JOB DESCRIPTION

**Senior Research Fellow in DCU Futures Evaluation Project
DCU Institute of Education
Dublin City University
3 Years Contract**

Introduction

Dublin City University www.DCU.ie is a young, ambitious and vibrant University, with a mission ‘to transform lives and societies through education, research, innovation and engagement’. Known as Ireland’s ‘University of Enterprise and Transformation’, it is committed to the development of talent, and the discovery and translation of knowledge that advances society and the economy. DCU was the Sunday Times Irish University of the Year 2021.

The University is based on three academic campuses in the Glasnevin-Drumcondra region of north Dublin. It currently has more than 18,000 students enrolled across five faculties – Science and Health, DCU Business School, Computing and Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences and DCU Institute of Education. DCU is committed to excellence across all its activities. This is demonstrated by its world class research initiatives, its cutting-edge approach to teaching and learning, its focus on creating a transformative student experience, and its positive social and economic impact. This exceptional commitment on the part of its staff and students has led to DCU’s ranking among the top 2% of universities globally. It also consistently features in the world’s Top 100 Young Universities (currently in QS Top 70 Under 50, Times Higher Top 150 Under 100).

DCU is placed 84th in the world, in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings – measuring higher education institutions’ contributions towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Over the past decade, DCU has also been the leading Irish university in the area of technology transfer, as reflected by licensing of intellectual property. It ranks first in Ireland for graduate employment.

As part of this role the researcher will be required to participate in the DCU Research Career Framework. This framework is designed to provide significant professional development opportunities to Researchers and offer the best opportunities in terms of a wider career path.

Overview of the department

DCU Institute of Education

The DCU Institute of Education is the newest faculty of Dublin City University. It is based in a €70 million purpose built facility on the DCU St Patrick's Campus in Drumcondra in Dublin. Established in 2016 as Ireland's first University faculty of Education, it has a staff of more than 140 full-time academics and a student body in excess of 4,000. The Institute brings together students of education across all sectors from early childhood, to primary and post-primary and further and higher education. As well as providing a range of undergraduate programmes in education, the Institute offers a rich menu of taught and research-based postgraduate programmes, at doctoral, masters, diploma and certificate levels. As a centre of expertise and excellence in teacher education and education more generally, the Institute hosts a range of research centres in key areas of priority and has an ambitious and growing programme of research.

With internationally-recognised experts in education policy, inclusive and special education, curriculum and pedagogy, assessment, literacy, evaluation and teacher education, the Institute provides a dynamic learning and working environment. Staff can expect to encounter opportunities for multi-disciplinary work, not just in the Institute, but across the University. As one of the world's leading young Universities, DCU has established its fifth and newest faculty out of a conviction that studies and research in education and the preparation and support of teachers are central to the transformation of lives and communities. Committed to academic excellence and innovation, the DCU Institute of Education is confident its students and staff, and its graduates can flourish and lead in the challenging and complex contexts of 21st century education.

Role Profile

This is an exciting opportunity for the right candidate to guide the evaluation of a new approach to undergraduate education in an innovative University.

This project will evaluate the educational and institutional outcomes of [DCU Futures](#), funded by the Government of Ireland as part of the [Human Capital Initiative](#). The evaluation will run parallel to the Futures programme and focus on three overarching questions:

- What has changed as a result of DCU Futures?
- Did the changes result in improvements, and in what way?
- Are the changes sustainable and scalable?

The Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection (EQI), and the Centre for Assessment Research Policy and Practice in Education (CARPE) with key colleagues from the Institute of Education will lead the project, and in the first instance, will establish a "smart" evaluation framework that considers multiple perspectives, including those of staff, students, the institution, and the wider HE policy community.

Duties and Responsibilities

Listed framework will seek to address the following duties and responsibilities for the role:

- Investigate the extent to which the DCU Futures programme design impacts the motivation of students recruited to the initial cohorts, their expectations and initial impressions of the programme;
- Evaluate the evidence of the nature and degree of the enhancement of student learning at the heart of DCU Futures programmes relative to non-Futures programmes, and the features that resulted in these enhancements;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Futures programme structures in terms of the sustainability of both the programme design and development phase, and the programme delivery;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Futures programme structures in terms of the extent to which disciplinary and individual diversity is accommodated;
- In the case of transversal skills, undertake comparative studies between Futures and non-Futures students to evaluate the impact of embedding transversal skills within the curriculum, in a “living lab” construct;
- Engage with programme teams and the wider DCU community to establish the impact of engaging with DCU Futures for academic and other DCU staff practice both in DCU Futures and across other DCU programmes;
- Monitor both the changes in assessment practices relative to traditional practice and the impact of these changes from both a staff and student perspective across the new programmes;
- Evaluate the evidence of the impact of Futures amongst academic staff, considering as measures of change: experience, mindset, attitude, practice and skillset;
- Capture and evaluate the impact of the DCU Futures on the institution as a whole including on academic regulations and structures, programme planning, timetabling, use of space, culture, curriculum and assessment more generally within DCU;
- Develop a series of recommendations to enable positive impacts identified during the evaluation project to be scaled across the institution.

The DCU Institute of Education will lead this project and is putting in place a team of researchers to undertake the work, reporting to a steering committee that will have oversight of the project.

Qualifications and Experience

The ideal candidate will hold PhD and will normally be required to have 6 years’ relevant experience, 2 of which should be Level 2 equivalent and will:

- Have experience of designing evaluation projects for innovations in educational settings, ideally in a tertiary institution or for tertiary systems;
- Have led or played a key role in the delivery of evaluation projects of this kind;
- Have a demonstrated track record in working collaboratively, including mentoring early career research colleagues in the delivery of high quality work;

- Have highly developed oral and written communications skills, and an ability to persuade and engage;
- Be confident and competent in the collection and management of data from a range of sources - institutional and programme level data, surveys etc.

The person will be located in DCU Institute of Education, and will work closely with the Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection in Education (EQI), and with the Centre for Assessment Research Policy and Practice in Education (CARPE). They will report to the project steering committee on the project.

In day-to-day matters, they will report to Prof Joe O'Hara, Director of EQI.