



Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



DCU Access Annual Review 2018 - 2019





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Welcome

Dublin City University is home to Ireland's largest and very first University-based Access Programme. Here at DCU, we have a strong tradition of creating equality of access for students from groups currently under-represented in higher education.



At DCU, we have always been committed to the principle that access to third level education should be based on ability alone, and not on a family's socioeconomic background. Over the past year, our Access programme has continued to deliver on that commitment, as part of DCU's mission to "transform lives and societies". We are proud to say that DCU Access is the largest initiative of its kind in Ireland. From primary school level through to graduation, it offers programmes and supports that expand horizons and enable students to reach their full potential. DCU Access students often outperform their colleagues, both academically and in terms of graduate employment rates.

This year, we have also introduced Access to the Workplace. As part of this significant new strand of support, partner enterprises and organisations employ students over the summer months in areas that are relevant to their studies. The success of DCU Access would not be possible without the support we receive from our Corporate Supporters, DCU Alumni and other Private Donors, through the DCU Educational Trust. Philanthropy continues to play an important role in enabling us to encourage young people from all backgrounds to consider third level education as a viable option and provide the necessary supports to help them flourish in their careers by completing their programme of study at DCU.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian MacCraith".

Professor Brian MacCraith
President
Dublin City University



As Ireland's University of Enterprise Dublin City University has led the way in providing access to opportunities in third level education for students from under represented groups. In the Access Service we are determined to continue to build on past achievements and to be innovative to ensure our students get an equal opportunity to avail of higher education. We are pleased to be able to share these new developments with you in this report.

Building on twenty-nine years of experience working with local schools and communities, the DCU Access Service with the support of our corporate partners aim to support equal opportunities for our target groups into and through higher education. Working closely with linked schools in North Dublin, we aim to make a positive impact on the educational journey of students whilst also supporting their teachers, parents and the local community to see higher education as a viable, realistic and achievable option for them.

In this report we highlight our achievements, take you through an overview of our outreach activities and share some of our student stories. We are also delighted to share information on two new exciting innovations.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our activities over the past year.

Cathy McLoughlin
Head of Access Service
Dublin City University

Mission, Values and Strategy

Our Mission

'In partnership with the DCU community, we engage with local schools and communities to raise awareness of higher education opportunities. Using evidence based best practice, we provide equal access to, and support progression through DCU'.



Our Values

We are committed to:

- Equality of opportunity
- Empowerment
- Social Inclusion
- Diversity
- Transformative learning experience
- Equality of outcome
- Social Mobility



Our Strategy

Research has shown that in the North Dublin area, there are fifteen Electoral Districts where 8% or less of the population hold a third level degree or equivalent* (Census 2016).

To promote progression to third level, the DCU Access strategy consists of six strands:



Strands one and two, **outreach and engagement**, focus on a number of under-represented groups as specified in the National Access Plan. In addition, the DCU Outreach and Engagement Strategy targets the following groups:

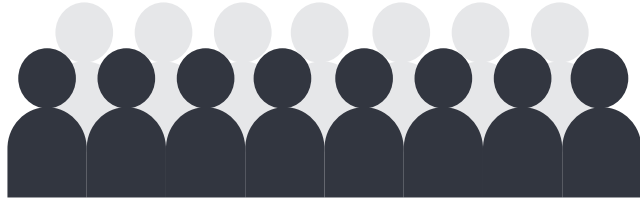
- Double Disadvantage - students who are experiencing educational disadvantage and who also have a physical, sensory or learning disability
- 1st Generation - no history of 3rd level education in the family
- Gender - working class boys
- In Care / Young Carers
- Students from the Traveller Community

The third strand, **transition** to DCU, is closely managed by Outreach and Post Entry. Our orientation programmes are a vital resource for incoming students and help them become familiar and confident with the services that support the facilities and staff of DCU.

The fourth, fifth and sixth strands of the DCU Access strategy focus on **retention, progression and outcomes**. From our research; continuous personal, academic and financial support impacts greatly on students' success, from increasing retention, to supporting progression and achieving better grades. This year we have continued to focus on progression and outcomes, in collaboration with the DCU Educational Trust we have introduced paid summer internships for 2nd year access students. Early research findings indicate that students have increased motivation and focus on their programme of study with a clearer understanding of possible career paths and options. Our emphasis on progression and outcomes is reinforced by the research.



1258
STUDENTS
CURRENTLY
ON THE
DCU ACCESS
PROGRAMME



320 FIRST YEARS IN 2018

130

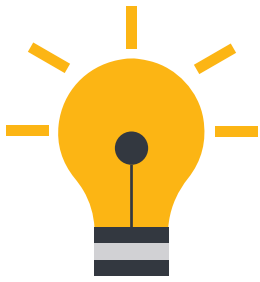
1st year students took
part in our AOL Maths Quiz



Students
were born in

55

different countries



1702

students participated in the DCU TY Programme.



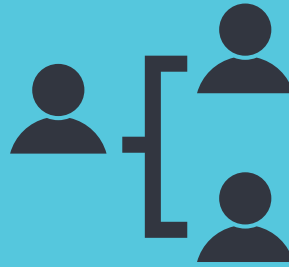
120

Parents and young players from Shelbourne FC attended our 'Going to College' workshop



69%

of access students enter on a reduced points offer



Over

6000

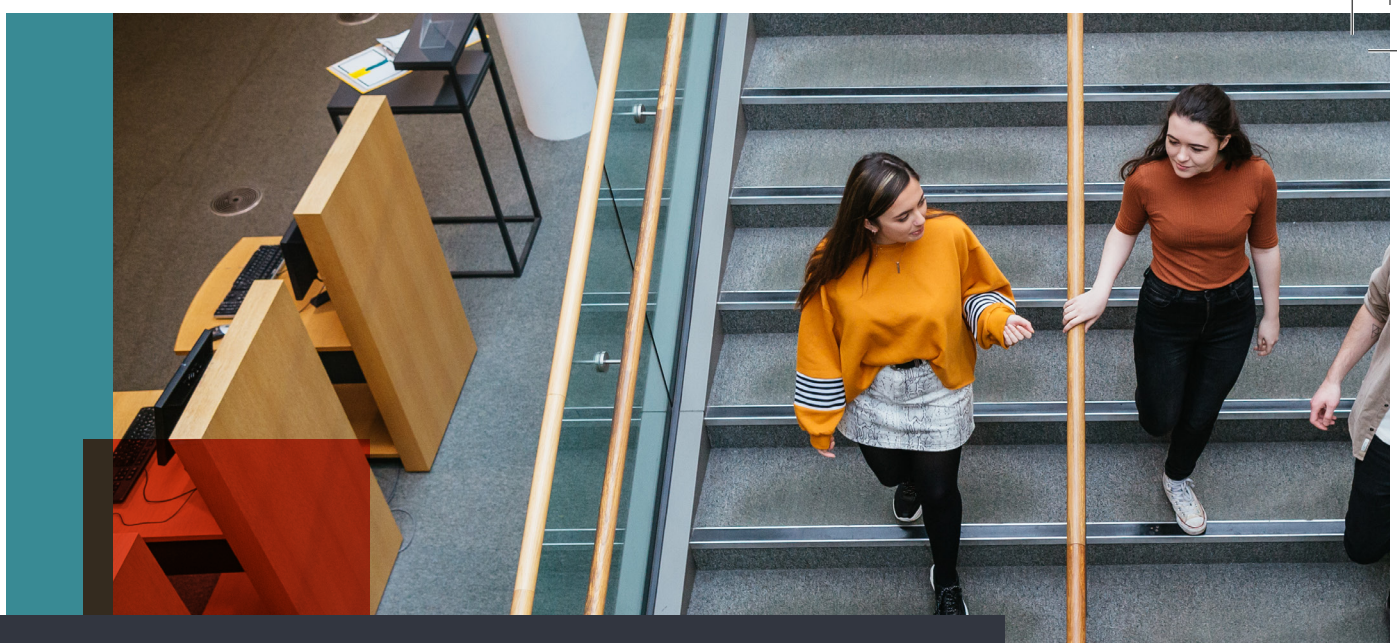
interactions as part of our outreach programme

Access to the Workplace (AttW) Placements:



53

students secured a summer internship in 38 Irish based companies through our pilot Access to the Workplace programme

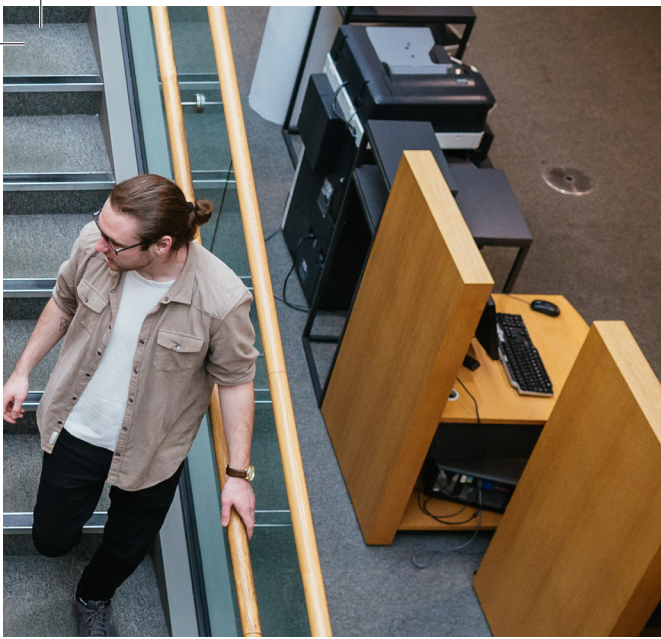


Talent, Discovery and Transformation

The Access Outreach service offers a series of activities, workshops and events to its 21 linked schools. Through our Outreach service, we aim to raise college aspirations by accompanying them on their journey throughout secondary school.

This service endeavors to:

- Encourage the progression of students from college AWARENESS to college READINESS
- Empower our team of student ambassadors to be involved in programme delivery
- Work collaboratively with schools, DCU services and Faculties and community organisations



Outreach

U & University (First to Third Years)

Our Access outreach programme aims to introduce first to third year students from our 21 linked schools to the DCU campus.

In 2018 -19, our events and activities included:

- Interactive and fun activities such as sports blitzes (rugby & soccer) and maths quizzes
- Campus tours and motivational talks in schools
- Junior Discover DCU workshops exploring the 'why' and 'how' of going to college and what campus life looks like.
- Talent search for gifted students to take part in the range of programmes run by the Centre for Talented Youth Ireland.
- Our annual DCU Access Achievement Awards took place in November and rewarded 367 third year students from 18 schools for their achievements in five categories: Academic, Community Spirit, Arts and Culture, Sport and Exceptional Nomination.

DCU TY Programme

In 2018, the TY programme entered its fourth year and participation continues to go from strength to strength. Students are drawn from DCU Access linked schools. This programme has been designed to increase student engagement in education, raise motivation and career aspirations and to increase progression to third-level. Students participate in multimedia, smart skills and student empowerment modules.

Students can also avail of opportunities to develop their confidence and interest in third level education. Guidance Counsellors and teachers are also offered the opportunity to avail of CPD workshops throughout the year.



Multimedia

Sixteen schools took part in our Multimedia module in 2018-19. The year culminated with the TY Awards ceremony in April 2019 with almost 700 students and teachers in attendance. DCU President Professor Brian MacCraith addressed students along with representatives from Young Social Innovators, the Child's Ombudsman, Amnesty International and the DCU School of Communication.

From the 96 video entries across three categories (**Bravery, Social Innovation, Children's Rights**), 9 winners were chosen for their interpretation of the designated themes and technical ability. None of the work would have been possible without the generous help of the DCU School of Communication and Access Ambassadors.

Smart Skills

SmartSkills, a programme aimed at introducing students to the concepts of coding and app design took place in **13 schools**. In addition, the programme expanded to create a module for Visually Impaired Students that took place in Rosmini Community School. The course was developed by Gerard Kelly, DCU Access Service with the kind support of Dr Dónal Fitzpatrick, DCU School of Computing, and Prof Deirdre Butler, DCU Institute of Education.

Leadership and Bravery Event

This year we held our first Leadership and Bravery event for TY students from linked schools with a packed lecture theatre of over 200 students. The students heard from inspirational leaders on what it takes to lead, they were encouraged to step forward and face life's challenges and achieve their ambitions. Speaking at the event were;

Colm O Gorman - Executive Director
Amnesty international Ireland

Clarece Bourke - Access Postgraduate Law student - DCU

John Lonergan - Former Governor
Mountjoy Prison

Ahmed Mansour - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office - DCU

Aoife McNicholl - Captain, Ireland
Powerchair football team

Girls in STEM

In April 2019, 25 girls from Mercy College participated in a workshop facilitated by 10 female researchers doing cutting-edge research at the ADAPT research Centre on the DCU Glasnevin campus. The workshop involved short talks, hands on activities and a Q and A session. The researchers also talked about their personal and academic journey leading to a career in STEM. The workshop was very successful. Students felt it was 'an eye opener' and they would consider STEM as an option for further study.



Space Week

Over 500 students attended this amazing event run in conjunction with DCU School of Mathematics, Science Foundation Ireland, ESERO Ireland and CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory. The event offered an opportunity for students to engage with space industry professionals to get a taste of the exciting opportunities that a career in space can offer.

UFirst Programme (Fifth and Sixth Years)

The U First programme is a key initiative available to our 21 linked schools. It offers the opportunity for secondary school students in fifth and sixth year to engage in an intensive programme of support throughout the academic year. This year 54 students completed the programme, attending a series of workshops between October 2018 and March 2019. Students attended workshops on:

- Goal setting
- Study skills
- Choosing a career and interview skills
- Life coaching
- How to apply to University
- Finance





Post-Entry

The transition from secondary to third level education is a challenging time for many students. To support this transition, the DCU Access Service run three orientation programmes in early September. Students are assigned to an orientation programme based on a number of factors including leaving certificate results, programme of choice, personal factors and geographical location.

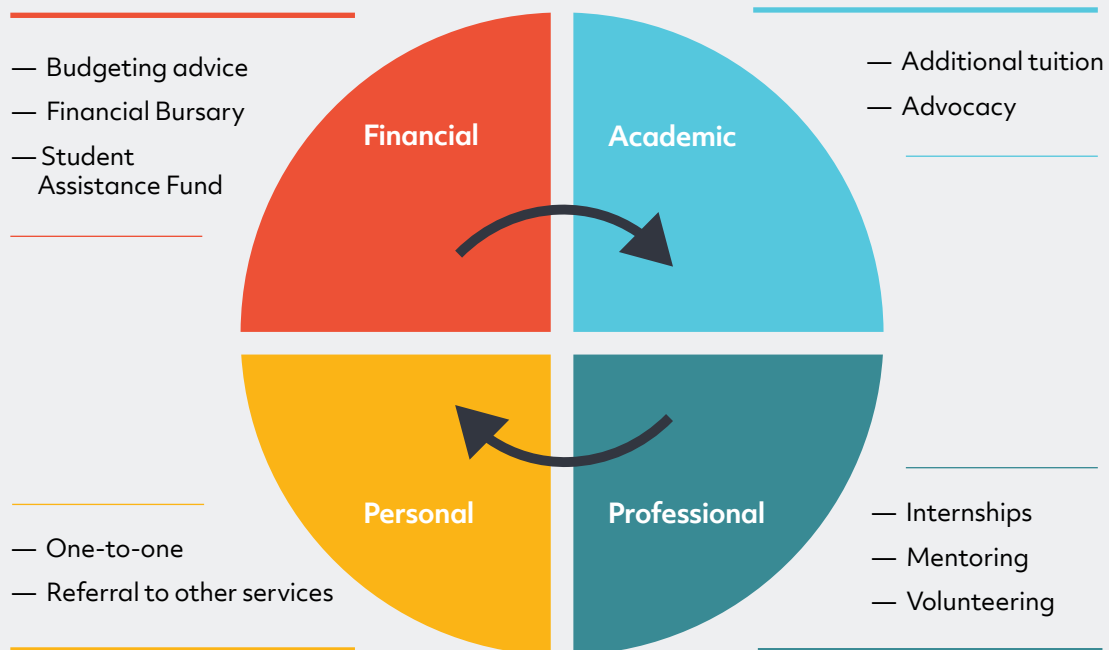
The aim of the programme is to assist students who have entered DCU through the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and the DCU Access Scheme to make a successful transition into DCU. The key aims of the programme are:

- Become familiar with their environment either on the DCU Glasnevin or the DCU St Patrick's Campus
- Meet lecturers and staff in an informal relaxed environment
- Practice public speaking and presentation skills
- Experience college and different learning styles
- Make new friends

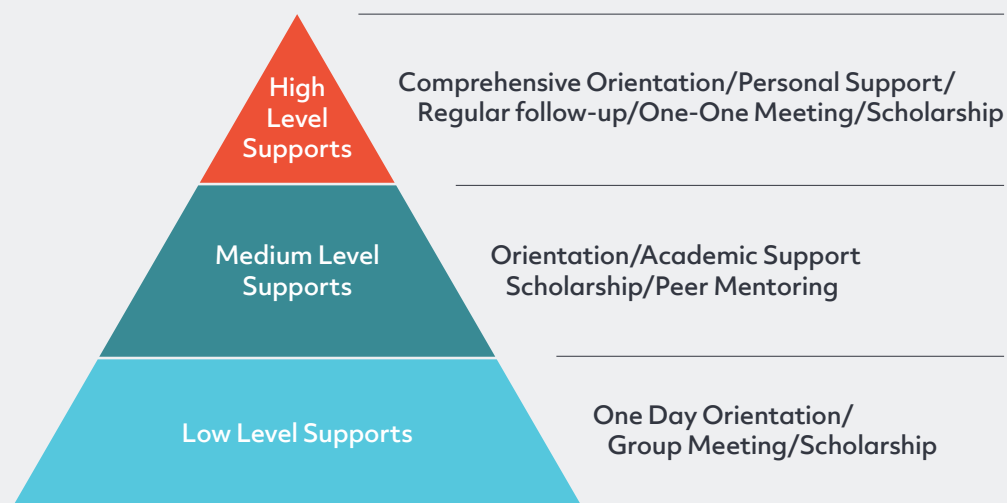


Retention and Progression

The DCU Access Service is committed to supporting students in engaging and participating fully in University life. The supports are grouped under four themes:



Using our innovative triage model, students are assessed on their level of need within three weeks of commencing DCU. Students may move between levels of support at different times during their studies in DCU.





Access to the Workplace

This year we launched an exciting new pilot programme, Access to the Workplace, to provide DCU Access students with high quality paid work placements during their summer break. This tailored summer internship programme was open to second year Access students. It was developed through collaboration between the DCU Access Service and DCU Educational Trust. The first year of the initiative has been a huge success with 53 Access students benefiting from a high quality work placement hosted by over 38 leading Irish companies. This new, innovative programme allowed us to develop and grow our connections further with industry partners and the wider DCU community.



Brian Leonard from PwC and Karena Flynn Thai from Pigsback.com pictured together with Professor Brian MacCraith, President of DCU and DCU Access students Gemma Treacy and Seán McElwain at the programme launch.



Preparing for the Programme

The DCU Access office provided a series of workshops in advance of students' summer work placement. Participating students attended workshops hosted by PwC, Workday and DCU Careers Service. These student - centred workshops focused on CV Building, Transitioning into the Workplace, Employability skills and Work etiquette.

Outlined below are some of the companies that participated in the pilot programme. These companies also supported over 1,000 financial scholarships to Access students. Students in turn earned over €150,000 combined during their summer employment, which will assist them in financially supporting their studies in the coming year.

The Access service are truly grateful to DCU Educational Trust and our supporters for their investment and belief in our students. The commitment and enthusiasm shown by these companies to provide employment opportunities for students throughout the summer was remarkable. We look forward to working with our supporters in 2020 to further enhance and develop the DCU Access to the Workplace Volunteering Programme.

AIG	CRH Group	Mondelez
Allergan	Dublin Airport Authority	National Recruitment
BC McGettigan	Fenergo	Federation
Bonnington Hotel	Highfield Healthcare	Neogen
Britvic	Irish Aviation Authority	Oracle
CAE Parc Aviation	Irish Distillers	Pigsback.com
Citrix	Marks and Spencers	PwC
CityJet	Mastercard	Siemens
Codex	Matheson	Verizon
Colgate Palmolive	Matthews Coach Hire	Vodafone
Collen Construction	McGarrell Reilly	William Fry
Combilift	McKeon Group	Willis Towers Watson

Graduate Stories

The DCU Access Service provides a number of professional supports for students that include placement support and guidance, internships, volunteering and networking opportunities both abroad and at home. In 2018 Access scholars participated on programmes such as the Washington Ireland Programme (WIP), Digicel Internship Programme in Jamaica and EIL's Intercultural Learning Programme (EILs volunteering abroad programme).



Nichelle's Story

My name is Nichelle Gabie. I have just completed my degree in Law and French at DCU and I will be graduating in 2019. During my undergraduate degree I faced many challenges, both personal and financial. I went to the DCU Access service for support. I was given assistance with accommodation and, during exams, I was given advice that continues to help me today. If it wasn't for the DCU Access Service, I would be homeless, struggling to complete my degree and I would never have discovered my full potential.

Now I have completed my degree, moved to the Netherlands to undertake a Master's degree programme in International Communications, even though I thought this would be impossible. I'd just like to let all future Access students know that no matter how difficult your personal or academic life is the DCU Access Service is always there to help. They will motivate you to work hard and stay focused on your degree. Then before you know it, you will be a graduate. Dream big and never give up.

Over all, my experience coming through the DCU Access Service has taught me that family circumstances don't have to stop you from pursuing your dreams. DCU has great support for students with learning

difficulties, students who are struggling financially and personally. I always knew that if I needed help I could turn to the Access Service.

To the Access Service, I'd just like to say thank you for all your support over the past 4 years. You made my time in DCU easier. I'm a proud Access student prepared to face the working world.

Nichelle, 2019 Graduate,
Law and French



Kayleigh's Story

I knew I wanted to be a teacher since I was a young girl. I had a second class teacher who was amazing and she inspired me to be a teacher. I always played 'school' with my sister, I always played the role of the teacher and she was always the student.

I never had a teacher who came from the same background as me although the teachers in my primary school really believed in us and pushed us to achieve beyond what was expected in my area at the time.

I don't feel teaching was promoted to me in school. In fact, my secondary school encouraged me to do a Post Leaving Certificate course and never believed I had the capability to get onto the primary school teaching programme. Luckily, I had a supportive family and my mam was an SNA. They encouraged me to follow my dreams and become a teacher.

The Access Service has been incredible to me throughout my studies. Not just financially as this was a major struggle coming to college, any problem I had big or small, I knew I could always come to them. In first year, I was really struggling with Irish and the thought of dropping out came to mind. The Access Service organised support to help myself and other students with Irish. This helped my level of Irish but also my confidence to speak, use and teach Irish.

The Access Service helped me to settle into college, find my way around campus and make friends for life during the orientation week before I started which made college life much easier.

I will definitely go to teach in an area similar to the one I grew up in. I would love to teach in the Dublin 8 area. I believe there is a label on disadvantaged areas and schools as being 'difficult and challenging'. I believe the opposite. My placements have been in DEIS schools and I absolutely loved every minute of it. It is good to be able to relate to children (I never had this growing up). I believe the schools, staff and students in my area are incredible and I would love to make a difference in a school here.

Kayleigh, 4th Year, Bachelor of Education (Primary)



Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires courage.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Access Ambassadors

The DCU Access Service could not deliver its' very ambitious programme of activities without the support of Access Ambassadors. Each year, student ambassadors who entered college through the Access route, are recruited and trained to provide invaluable support to Access staff.

Ambassadors act as mentors on outreach activities offering college advice and sharing their knowledge and experiences with students from our linked schools. We know from talking to students, parents and teachers that their involvement has a great impact on students who can identify with them and often view them as relatable role models.

We would like to thank all the Ambassadors for the hard work, commitment, and energy they brought to the role in the last year.







DCU Educational Trust

Access students receive an annual financial scholarship, made possible by generous philanthropic donations through major campaigns run each year by the DCU Educational Trust (DCUET). The Access service works closely with the Trust, DCU's donors and student representatives to convey the importance and impact of philanthropy in supporting DCU Access students to achieve their full potential.





At DCU Educational Trust, we are passionate about the power of higher education to transform lives and society and we believe great things are possible when philanthropy combines with a young, dynamic and ambitious university like DCU.

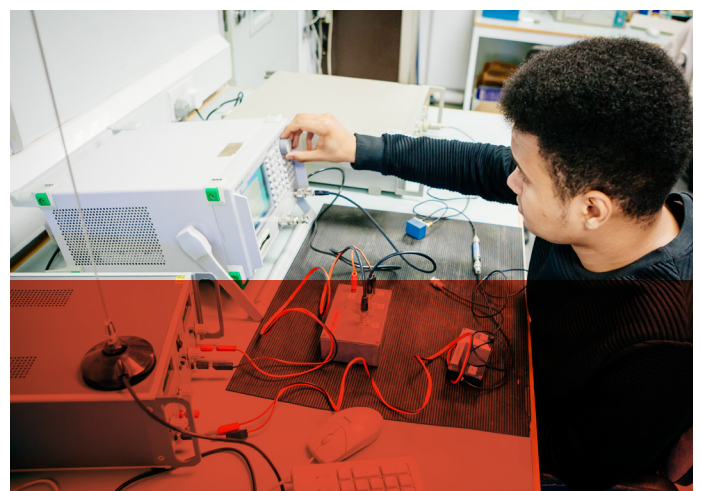
Through our fundraising work, we build meaningful partnerships with DCU's supporters for today and the future in order to further DCU's mission to transform lives and society through education, research, innovation and engagement.

The generous support of our donors allowed us to assist 1,258 DCU Access Students to pursue their dreams of a higher education in 2018/2019. This support is vital in enabling students to overcome the additional financial burden which entering university presents.

Our support comes from many different sources, from corporate donors, trusts and foundations to individual DCU friends and alumni who make a monthly gift to the Access Scholarship Programme.

Dublin City University Educational Trust is a registered charity (CHY 8960) established in 1988 to advance the development of Dublin City University.

For more information, please visit:
www.dcu.ie/trust





Dublin City University
Athlone Institute of Technology
Dundalk Institute of Technology
Maynooth University

Project Vision and Mission

Our vision is a student population that reflects and respects the diversity of the community in our region.

Our mission is to change who goes to college by working together as education providers and communities. This new partnership will empower future students to make informed choices and fulfil their potential.

Following a funding call in 2017, the Access Service working in collaboration with other units in DCU and the MEND (Midlands, East, North Dublin) higher education cluster, which comprises four institutions successfully received funding to develop a project called College Connect.

It is a Higher Education Authority funded three-year PATH 3 (Programme for Access to Higher Education) project which aims to admit 400 additional students from specific target groups (e.g. Travellers, one parent families, care experienced young people, people with disabilities, refugees) who are under-represented in higher education. College Connect is a collaborative regional approach which prioritizes people in the region experiencing multiple disadvantages.

College Connect will support aspiration raising, bolster educational attainment and promote college awareness. It will also assist participants to develop skills critical to higher education participation and employability.



Anthony Burrowes
The DCU Community Connector



4 Themes



Mentorship

Delivers access-based workshops to individuals, schools and community groups.



Pathways

Evaluate current routes into Higher Education, identify gaps and work to develop and explore new pathways.



Communications

Informs the community of ongoing work and progress.



Online Platform

Website providing clear information about going to college.



Meet the Team



Cathy McLoughlin
Head of Access

Cathy joined DCU in 2008 working as part of the Community Outreach Office in Ballymun, in 2009 she took up a role in the Access Service on the Glasnevin Campus. In 2013 she took over as Senior Access Officer and in 2018 was promoted to Head of the Access Service.

Prior to joining DCU Cathy worked for Blanchardstown Area Partnership Company in the area of adult and community education. She holds a BBS from DCU, a postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from the University of Westminster and a Master degree in Adult and Community Education from Maynooth University.



Colette Keogh
Senior Access Officer

Colette began working in the DCU Access Service in the year 2000. Colette began as the sole administrator for the Access Service, progressed to the role of post-entry support officer responsible for the retention and progression of Access students. Since March 2019, Colette has been in the role of Senior Access Officer.

Colette graduated from DCU as a mature student with a B.A in Education and Training in 2010 and has undertaken training in other areas such as Neuro Linguistic Programming, Counselling skills & Facilitation skills. Colette has also completed a diploma in Executive and Life Coaching with the Positive Success Group in Dublin and is currently in the final year of her Masters in Work & Organisational Psychology at DCU.



Margaret Lamont
Access Officer

Margaret joined the DCU Access team as an Access Officer on St Patrick's Campus DCU after the incorporation with St Patrick's College, Mater Dei and CICE in 2016. She works with Access students providing them with academic, financial and social support.

Margaret sits on the board of the Ballymun Initiative for 3rd level Education (BITE) and the Traveller Education Network.

Prior to this Margaret worked as the Access Officer in St Patrick's College, and also worked as a tutor and guest lecturer for the Human Development team situated in St Patrick's College. She is a past graduate of Loughborough University and DCU and has completed an MA (Humanities) in DCU. In 2016 Margaret qualified as an Executive Life Coach.



Fiona Hudson
Access Officer (Post-Entry)

Fiona joined the DCU Access team in January 2016 as an Access support officer. Fiona currently works with the post entry team. She works with students who have entered DCU through the HEAR or DCU Access scheme.

Prior to joining the team here in DCU Fiona worked as an Education Development Officer in communities experiencing education and socio-economic disadvantage in the Dublin North West area. Fiona is a past graduate of DCU and also completed her MA in Applied Social Studies in NUI Maynooth in 2014. Fiona is a member of Ireland's American Chamber of Commerce Young Leaders Network and also the Project Management Institute, completing her CAPM qualification in 2018.

Meet the Team



Aidan O'Driscoll
eLearning and Communications Officer

Aidan joined the DCU Access team in July 2019. Aidan works with the Access Outreach team. He primarily coordinates the TY program for 21 linked DEIS schools, running courses that cover topics from media content production to computer coding, all with the aim of promoting university as an accessible and viable path for students.

Prior to joining the team here in DCU Aidan worked for Education First for four years organising private educational programs. Aidan is a graduate of UCC and completed a Masters in Interactive Digital Media at Trinity College in August 2019.



Laurence Van der Haegen
Outreach Officer

Laurence joined the DCU Access Service as Access Outreach Project Officer in March 2019. Laurence is responsible for the design, coordination and delivery of Outreach Initiatives to 22 DEIS schools and community groups as part of the University Outreach and Engagement Strategy.

With twenty years' experience working in the youth sector as a youth worker and training officer, Laurence holds extensive knowledge and experience working with groups and individuals in marginalised communities in Dublin. Laurence is passionate about learning, non-formal education and personal development and has completed an MA in Adult and Learning Development in NUI Galway in 2018. She also graduated as a Personal, Business and Executive Coach with the Irish Lifecoach Institute in May 2019.



Jennifer Collins
Access Administrator

Jennifer joined the DCU Access team in September 2016 to provide secretarial and administrative support to the Access service. Her role also includes administration and reporting of department finances, event organisation, and management of Student Ambassador and Tutor contracts. Jennifer holds certifications in Computer Applications and Microsoft System Engineering, and has previously worked in the ICT and Investment Funds industries.





Thank You

The Access Service would like to thank all of our partners who share and support our vision of the power of higher education to transform lives, including our linked schools, the DCU Educational Trust and the wider DCU Community.

2020 marks thirty years of DCU Access, a milestone in our history. Over 4,000 students will have entered DCU through the Access programme. We look forward to celebrating this event with you. If you would like to get involved, find out more, or discuss ways in which you can support any of our projects, please feel free to get in touch. You will find our details overleaf.





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