



Supporter Impact Report

2024/25



Iontaobhas Oideachasúil
Educational Trust



"Our University's mission is to transform lives and societies. That is what drives everything we do, from our research innovations to our exceptional student experience.

Resourcing our responsibilities has become challenging, but I would like to thank DCU's supporters, friends and alumni for helping us to realise this mission through your support for the transformative projects showcased in this report. The full impact of what we achieve through philanthropy will reverberate in our society over the decades ahead: in healthier communities, powerful insights to shape our future economy, and the success of the many students supported by your generosity."

Professor Dáire Keogh
President, Dublin City University

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A Word from Our Chair

Each year, our Supporter Impact Report celebrates the generosity of our donors and supporters, and showcases the impact of philanthropy on DCU's mission to transform lives and societies.

In 2024/25, our supporters were instrumental in advancing initiatives to shape a better future, from backing research in cancer treatment and health literacy to funding scholarships that ensure students from all backgrounds can make the most of a DCU education.

At the launch of DCU Polaris in April 2025, I was struck by the sense of excitement and possibility created by this state-of-the-art facility for STEM teaching, learning and research. I am deeply grateful to all our supporters who share our vision for Polaris: a hub for high-impact health research, engineering innovation and future-focused education. This is only the beginning, as opportunities continue to develop for visionary partners to join us in unlocking the potential of this cutting-edge facility.

In recent months, DCU has risen to the world's top 350 universities in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, and first in Ireland for research quality (THE 2026) and sustainability (QS 2025). Every one of our supporters has been part of this success – and from here, we can achieve even more.

We hope that you enjoy reading about your shared impact over the last academic year, and thank you once again for being a valued partner in our mission.

Deirdre Hannigan
Chair, DCU Educational Trust



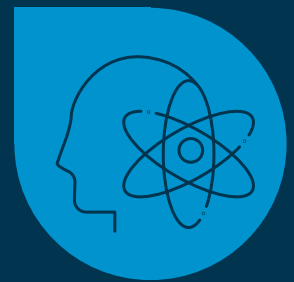


Transforming Lives and Societies Together

In 2024/25, our supporters pledged over €6 million to advance projects that will deliver DCU's mission to transform lives and societies and help to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The gifts made by our donors this year supported three key pillars:

Research for Society



Engagement



Student Experience

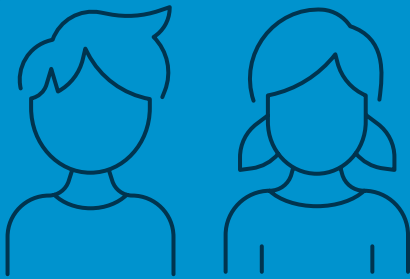
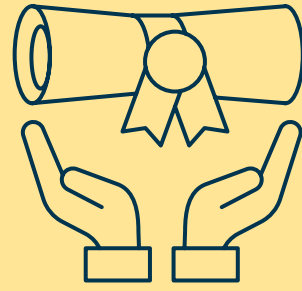


Research for Society



14

PhD candidates supported by philanthropy

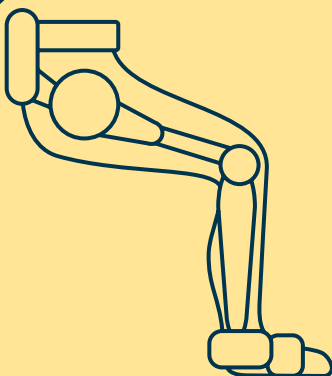


1st

report of its kind to calculate the cost of a united Ireland

487

teenagers engaged in health literacy – DCU LifeLab



1 million

steps for people living with paralysis – DCU Exoskeleton Programme

Advancing Breakthrough Research...

At DCU, our research is driven by innovative thinking and the search for breakthroughs with impact.

Together with our supporters, we are leveraging DCU's unique research strengths to deliver solutions for a better world. Our ability to deliver cutting-edge research and grow our talented doctoral student community is greatly enhanced by philanthropic partnerships that support research in areas such as youth health literacy, all-island economics and STEM education.

Research for Society supported by philanthropy in 2024/25 included:

Doctoral Research: In 2024/25, our partners further increased the scale of our doctoral student community by supporting fourteen PhD candidates to pursue research in fields ranging from cancer treatment to AI in education. This year also saw the creation of a number of new PhD scholarships supported by philanthropy, including the Fujitsu PhD Scholarships and the Deloitte-CTYI PhD Scholarship.

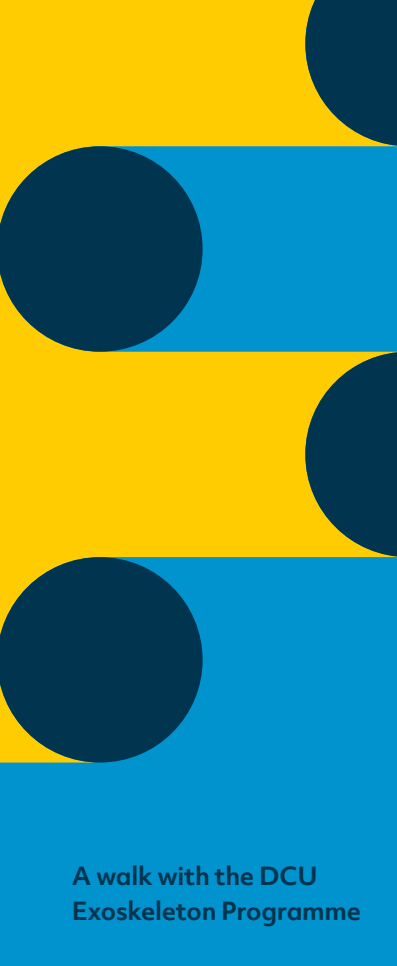
Naughton Family Chair in STEM Education: The Naughton Family Chair is the first in Ireland to focus on STEM education at primary level and in early childhood. As Chair, Professor Hamsa Venkat has made a significant impact on education research, policy and practice. In 2024/25, the Chair led the launch of a new Masters specialism in STEM Education to support cutting-edge STEM teaching and leadership in Irish schools. Her leadership in the field of mathematics education has also given DCU Institute of Education a key role in the development of Ireland's new STEM curriculum for primary schools, which will impact every child in Ireland. Internationally, Prof Venkat is leading two new projects analysing the impact of innovative STEM training for educators in regions of Africa where teachers have limited access to professional development.

Neurodivergence in the Workplace: Supported by Bank of Ireland and Accenture, DCU has carried out new research on the barriers and enablers that face neurodivergent people in the workplace. Led by Dr Aoife Brennan and Dr Laura Gormley, this study found one in four corporate employees self-identify or have been diagnosed as neurodivergent - and that the wellbeing of neurodivergent employees is significantly poorer than that of their neuromajority colleagues, with 18.5% of neurodivergent employees likely experiencing significant levels of depression. In response, the project has produced nine neuro-affirmative and inclusive guidelines that will support Irish businesses to embed inclusion in their everyday practices. Recommendations include access to quiet focus spaces for all, flexible working hours, reducing the reliance on hot-desking and overhead lighting, and committing the leadership and support to deliver inclusive company policies.

DCU Changemaker Schools Network: This network is based on the simple but powerful idea that all children can be Changemakers, with the skills and confidence to lead change in their home, school, community and society. With philanthropic support from basis.point, Rethink Ireland and a group of individual donors, the network has grown to 50 member schools in 2024/25, and is now preparing to expand its reach to secondary schools and early childhood education for the first time. Each year, the network equips over 12,978 students with the essential skills of empathy, creativity, leadership and teamwork so they are ready to thrive in an unscripted future and to lead change in our society.

L-R: Doctoral students Carrie Grennan, Claire Hefferon, Carroll Keoghan and Laura McGrath, whose research on autism education is supported by philanthropy





A walk with the DCU Exoskeleton Programme

DCU Exoskeleton Research Programme: The DCU Exoskeleton Research Programme enables vital research into the future of paralysis treatment, and provides a range of health benefits to wheelchair users who participate in supported walking sessions across its adult and paediatric studies. This year, the DCU Exoskeleton Programme supported over 1 million steps for people living with paralysis, generating vital data to support cutting-edge research, including studies that harness AI, machine learning and wearable sensors to understand the individual's experience. This research and the robotic exoskeleton suits that make it possible are philanthropically funded through Community Foundation Ireland, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation and by individual donors.

DCU Anti-Bullying Centre: In 2024, research from DCU Anti-Bullying Centre found that 45% of 11- to 17-year-olds reported witnessing online bullying at least once over the previous months. These bystanders were found to be less confident than non-bystanders in knowing what actions to take when cyberbullying happens to them. The FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme developed by the Centre is a vital bystander intervention that gives students, teachers and school staff the tools to tackle bullying and promote online safety. In 2025, with support from the Department of Education and Youth and Rethink Ireland, the programme reached 1,160 primary schools and 540 post-primary schools in Ireland. Philanthropic support from Equinix Foundation is backing essential research on children's online safety and the protection of LGBTQ+ groups, in collaboration with DCU School of Law and Government. The Centre's experts also collaborated with Vodafone Foundation Ireland and Childline by ISPCC to develop content and features for the Tozi app, co-designed with young people to tackle bullying and promote online safety.


Focus On: DCU LifeLab

At present, the physical and mental health of Irish teenagers is in a poor state. Only 10% of Irish adolescents report meeting physical activity guidelines, while the frequency and severity of reported mental health issues is also increasing.

Yet this is not an equal problem in society, and we know that health outcomes are poorest for socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Irish research has revealed persistent and widening gaps in adolescent health indicators such as health-related fitness, sleep, substance and alcohol abuse, mental health and dietary habits.

Students experience health literacy activities in the new LifeLab facility





DCU LifeLab is a health literacy intervention co-designed with teachers, young people, and health professionals to improve the health knowledge, choices and behaviours of Irish teenagers in disadvantaged communities. Informed by ongoing research and engagement, LifeLab delivers hands-on learning experiences that empower young people to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing—and become empowered advocates for change in their schools, families, and communities.

In 2024/25, the philanthropic support of the Sunflower Charitable Foundation has significantly accelerated the growth and development of DCU LifeLab. This gift has enabled the programme's move to a dedicated state-of-the-art facility in DCU Polaris, supported 487 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds to take part in LifeLab's innovative health literacy programme, and fuelled pioneering research into youth health literacy.

“The Sunflower Charitable Foundation is proud to support the DCU LifeLab programme, aimed at improving the health choices of Irish teenagers. It particularly welcomes the use of interactive education spaces in helping young people cope with the pace of change in today’s environment.”

Samantha Briody, CEO of the Sunflower Charitable Foundation

“This support from the Sunflower Charitable Foundation marks a transformative moment for LifeLab. It will allow us to grow the programme, deepen our research, and bring health literacy education to more young people across Ireland. By embedding interactive, real-world learning into the school experience, we’re equipping teenagers with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about their health—both now and into the future.”

Dr Hannah Goss, DCU LifeLab



Focus On: Understanding the Economic Impacts of a United Ireland

Although there is no certainty that referendums on a united Ireland will be called in the foreseeable future, a majority both North and South believe that they will be held within ten years. For undecided voters, economic issues rank as the most significant issue, but the research on potential economic impacts has been limited.

A 2025 report from the All-Island Economy research project estimates the year one cost of a united Ireland at €3 billion, reaching break-even within 9 years. This is the first peer-reviewed report to calculate the cost of unity over the first ten years.

This research, authored by Professor John Doyle in DCU was produced as part of a collaboration between the North-South Research project at DCU and Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC), and is supported by philanthropic funding by Denis O'Brien and led by Professor John Doyle (DCU) and Dr Eoin Magennis (Ulster University). This ambitious project looks at short-term cross-border economic lessons that could benefit the island now, and the longer-term economic issues if there is to be a referendum on unity. It vital evidence to the debate on the relative weakness of the Northern Ireland economy, and the poor economic peace dividend since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and also explores if key economic indicators would be likely to improve in a united Ireland.

With a referendum on a united Ireland now a possibility before 2035, the All-Island Economy research project aims to avoid the mistakes of a Brexit style debate by ensuring voters have reliable, impartial and rigorously researched information to inform decisions during the debate.

In 2024/25, the project published critical reports on the economic geography and the public finance cost of a united Ireland, as well as an online economic dashboard that for the first time allows some key economic indicators to be compared on a North-South basis, providing key data insights, and helping inform both the general public and policymakers.

Focus On: Doctoral Research – Órla Cremen



The Hannah and Paula Delves PhD Scholarship has enabled Órla Cremen to further her ambitions for a career in research. Her PhD work focusing on understanding the immune-related side effects of Antibody Drug Conjugates (ADCs) is already showing promise.

"I'm originally from Cork, where I did an undergraduate degree in medical science. I majored in cancer biology and immunology and then straight after that, I applied for the PhD scholarship at DCU. Research was something I was always interested in; my dad was a science teacher, and my mum was a nurse, so it was always something that was around me.

I knew that I wanted to go into the area of cancer research as a career, so the PhD was the next step. My project is on cancer immunology. As everyone knows, there are a lot of side effects to chemotherapy. When people have cancer treatment, they can get very sick, they lose their hair, and they can have a lot of problems. Antibody drug conjugates (ADCs) are kind of a targeted therapy that delivers the cancer treatment right to the tumour, which helps reduce side effects. They've been very successful and there are about 14 approved for use at the moment.

But it's also been seen that there are some side effects to them. It's thought that the ADCs are incorrectly taken up by immune cells, resulting in side effects related to the immune system. Many people have to be taken off treatment early because of these side effects, whereas those who don't experience them have a really good response to treatment. That's what my PhD project is about, trying to figure out why this happens and then looking at drugs that you could give with the ADC, that would perhaps prevent these side effects from happening and keep more people on potentially life-saving treatment."

Focus On: Doctoral Research – Adam Daly

Adam Daly is a PhD student in DCU School of Psychology whose research focuses on cancer survivorship, health and culture. Here, he shares how philanthropic initiatives have supported his educational journey, from school outreach to his doctoral scholarship. With less than 1% of doctoral students coming from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the Deloitte Access PhD Scholarship seeks to remove barriers to success and support talented students to pursue research careers.



"I think my mam always saw college as a way to have a better life. It was important to her that we go and get the best education we could and make the most of the opportunities available to us. It certainly hasn't always been easy, with cancer heavily affecting my family over the years – but now my siblings and I all have a college education.

I went to a DEIS secondary school, where I was lucky enough to take part in a lot of initiatives with the DCU Access Outreach Programme. Learning about supports like the SUSI grant and the DCU Access Programme made college feel like a real possibility for me.

I applied to study Psychology in DCU because I wanted to help people and facilitate positive change. Although I just missed out on the points for my course, I was able to qualify on reduced points through Access, and the constant support and encouragement of DCU staff and lecturers have genuinely changed my life.

During my undergraduate degree, I had incredible opportunities to follow my ambitions and participate in international research in culture and health psychology. I won four research grants, including from the Irish Cancer Society and Breakthrough Cancer, published three research papers, and I already have more research in the works.

My most recent paper is a qualitative study of tattoo artists' perspectives on therapeutic tattoos for cancer survivors. Many cancer treatments can lead to a disrupted body image and identity. There's a wide practice of therapeutic tattooing for cancer survivors, yet it's an under researched area. Our study aimed to identify tattoo artists' perspectives on therapeutic tattooing for cancer survivors, and the impact on them of doing this work.

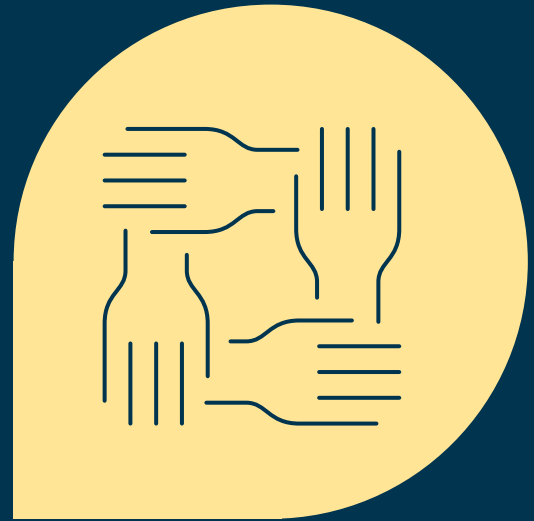
This scholarship will help me to continue building a career researching cancer survivorship, health, and culture, and it's an opportunity I could not have imagined four years ago."

Engagement



€1m

strategic
partnership
with Deloitte

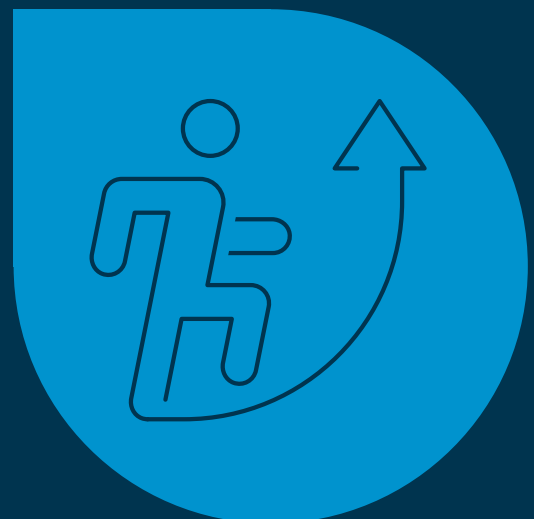


483

Access to the Workplace
placements since 2019

1.5m

learners to benefit
from the STEM
Teacher Internship
Programme



Engaging with Our Community...

At Ireland's university of enterprise, our partnerships with industry, communities and alumni enable us to achieve even more for our students and for society. These meaningful connections create real-world opportunities for our students, drive community engagement, and amplify our impact.

STEM Teacher Internship Programme

The STEM Teacher Internship Programme (STInt) is a DCU-led initiative that promotes innovative learning in STEM education by supporting internship opportunities for pre-service and early career teachers.

Last summer, the programme celebrated its tenth year, and placed 62 pre-service and early career teachers as interns in partner companies. Through these 12-week paid internships, teachers gained first-hand experience of the diverse range of STEM careers and opportunities available. To date, 327 teachers have completed 372 hands-on internships at 70 leading Irish companies through STInt.

These internships are only possible thanks to funding from our partners Skillnet Ireland, Research Ireland, the Department of Education and Intel, alongside the engagement of our industry partners in technology, professional services, pharma and medical devices. Thanks to our partners, STInt interns will go on to inspire a passion for STEM in future generations, potentially impacting over 1.33 million learners during their careers in Irish classrooms.

In a successful year, the programme, led by Dr Eilish McLoughlin, was presented with the STEM Recruitment Campaign of the Year Award at the 2025 Business Post Women in STEM Awards.



Deloitte Partners with DCU Business School

In January 2025, DCU and Deloitte announced a new strategic alliance to elevate educational opportunities and drive innovation.

Supported by a philanthropic commitment of €1 million over the next five years, this partnership will benefit all DCU Business School students. Building on the long-standing relationship between DCU and Deloitte, this collaboration is encouraging creativity and problem-solving through real-world challenges in an annual hackathon, recognising excellence through academic prizes, and bringing students insight and experience from Ireland's leading companies through Deloitte's Best Managed Companies Programme.

Additionally, in line with Deloitte's commitment to social inclusion, the agreement will broaden access for students through the Access to the Workplace programme, with new funding dedicated to Access students pursuing PhD research.

“Deloitte is proud to continue our collaboration with Dublin City University. Our shared commitment to education, innovation, and societal impact makes this initiative a natural fit. We look forward to seeing the positive outcomes of our joint efforts over the duration of our relationship.”

Harry Goddard, CEO, Deloitte Ireland

“The University is proud to forge this alliance with Deloitte, which deepens our existing collaborations and further enhances DCU Business School's transformative student experience. Thanks to their vision and generosity, we will create new pathways for talented students to excel in their studies and make their mark on the future.”

Professor Dáire Keogh, President of DCU

DCU Access to the Workplace

The award-winning DCU Access to the Workplace programme continued to build on its success in 2025. This transformative programme aims to level the playing field for student groups who experience disadvantage in the workplace following graduation. Since 2019, the programme has provided 483 high-quality summer internships for DCU Access students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and for neurodivergent students.

An independent research report by EQI has found that the programme delivers for both students and employers, with a significant 71% of student participants employed in their field of study within six months of graduation, and many securing jobs due to programme exposure.

Employers praised student interns for their enthusiasm, soft skills, and technical abilities – and 93% of participating companies agreed that the programme improved workplace diversity.

DCU Access to the Workplace is made possible by the leading Irish companies who host our students and support Access scholarships at DCU. The programme is supported by partners LinkedIn and Rethink Ireland's Scaling Education Fund.

ATTW participants Jennifer Lukikeba, Tommy Hamzat and Amy Harrison

“This study clearly illustrates the positive impact that this highly innovative DCU programme is delivering. Access to the Workplace increases opportunities and employability for underrepresented students, while introducing employers to diverse and enthusiastic new talent, making it a win-win proposition for all.”

Professor Dáire Keogh,
President of DCU





Shay Walsh, President of DCU Prof Dáire Keogh, Michelle O'Hagan and Jonny Cooper

DCU Alumni Fund

In 2025, DCU Educational Trust launched the DCU Alumni Fund, bringing together the many graduates whose generosity helps the University to transform lives and societies.

DCU graduates Shay Walsh (BEng Electronic Engineering), Michelle O'Hagan (Bachelor of Business Studies) and Jonny Cooper (BSc Sport Science and Health) joined current students and DCU President Professor Dáire Keogh on campus to show their support for the fundraising launch.

This fund builds on strong alumni engagement with the DCU community through volunteering, mentoring and donations that support a new generation of students to overcome barriers and reach their full potential. Donations to the Alumni Fund will accelerate doctoral research opportunities in areas from cancer treatment to sustainability, and deliver vital Access scholarships for young people from underrepresented backgrounds.

Speaking about the launch, Jason Sherlock, Director of Development at DCU Educational Trust said:

“When DCU alumni join together, we make remarkable things happen. I’m proud to see this new fund bringing together the many graduates who give. It’s an opportunity for alumni around the world to make a real, collective impact and advance DCU’s transformative student programmes and doctoral research opportunities.”

Graduates and supporters interested in getting involved can help shape the future for a new generation of students and researchers at dcu.ie/donate

Student Experience

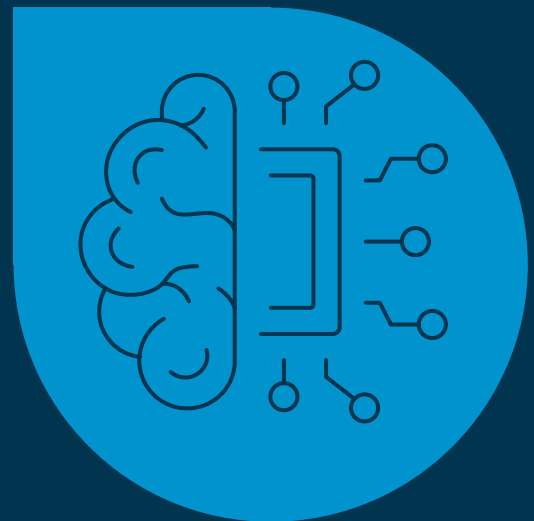


1,000
Access students
enrolled at DCU



3,000
students access advanced
STEM facilities in
DCU Polaris

58
University of Sanctuary
Scholarships since 2016



6,282
students participating
in sport

Pioneering a Transformative Student Experience...

At DCU, we are committed to giving students a world-class education that prepares them to thrive in an unscripted future. Through our innovation in teaching and learning, focus on excellence, and our state-of-the-art student facilities, we empower our students to reach their full potential. This transformative university experience is amplified by the generosity of our philanthropic partners, who support vital programmes to advance inclusion in higher education and create opportunities for students to innovate and excel.



Student experience initiatives supported by philanthropy in 2024/25 included:

Access Scholarships: Our supporters helped to provide life-changing scholarships to over 1,000 Access students enrolled at DCU in 2024/25. This scholarship support removes barriers to success for young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, enabling talented students to achieve even more. In over 30 years running Ireland's first and largest Access programme, we have developed a comprehensive package of personal, financial and academic supports that empower students to excel in their studies and reach their ambitions.

Access Outreach: With support from State Street, JP Morgan Chase Foundation and yahoo!, DCU's Access Outreach Programme continued to engage with the local community, promote third level education and open up paths for progress to further education for students from our local DEIS schools. The Outreach team welcomed local students to campus and delivered interactive STEM workshops, hands-on college introduction sessions, and college preparation programmes, engaging students in university experiences that are accessible, inclusive and support college-readiness. Working intensively with 25 linked secondary schools and an extensive community outreach programme, Access engaged almost 6,000 individuals in 2024/25. In addition to schools, the programme engaged with youth organisations including Youthreach, Adult Education Centres, Further Education Centres and community groups.



Memorial and Endowed Scholarships:

In 2024/25, we were pleased to award 31 scholarships created in memory of some of the University's most cherished past students, staff and friends. A further 14 students were endowed scholarships and ICON scholarships, generously created by friends and supporters of the university. This year, a total of six new fully funded doctoral scholarships were also awarded at the event, supporting talented PhD students to pursue research with impact in the fields of cancer research, health psychology and inclusive education. These include the Paula and Hannah Delves Scholarship, the Deloitte Access PhD Scholarship, and four Autism Education PhD Scholarships, created through matched funding from philanthropist Paul Kerley and Bank of Ireland.

University of Sanctuary: Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, five postgraduate students received University of Sanctuary scholarships in 2024/25. Since becoming Ireland's first University of Sanctuary in 2016, DCU has provided scholarships to 58 international protection applicants that enable them to pursue their dream of higher education in Ireland. The scholarships are part of a programme of outreach and engagement activities to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging in the DCU community, including the award-winning Irish Refugee Integration Network.

Colm Delves Leadership Lab: The Colm Delves Leadership Lab has become one of Europe's first dedicated mixed reality classrooms, expanding the boundaries of what is possible in teaching and learning. Designed to develop next generation leaders, this purpose-built environment supports the development of leadership and transversal skills, and creates a living lab for research on virtual reality in education. This state-of-the-art leadership lab was established with philanthropic support from Digicel in memory of business leader and DCU alumnus Colm Delves. Last year, the lab delivered immersive virtual reality experiences to 4,159 visitors, including DCU students, industry partners, and students from local secondary schools. Through over 4,854 virtual reality hours, the lab empowered students to develop key digital and leadership skills, learning about and through virtual reality.

Patrick and Sandra Thorpe in the Challenge Based Learning Lab



Collaborative Learning in DCU Business School: In 2025, DCU Business School completed the development of two collaborative learning spaces thanks to generous philanthropic support. A new Challenge Based Learning laboratory has created the ideal environment for active learning and collaborative group work. Equipped with interactive learning tools and a focus on supporting students to solve real-world challenges, this dynamic learning space was made possible by the generous support of DCU alumnus Patrick Thorpe and Searing Point Wealth Management. Philanthropic support has also created a dedicated space for PhD students and academic staff to read, reflect, collaborate, and share ideas: the Research Reading and Seminar Room. Supported by business leader Cathal Friel and Raglan Capital, this research-focused space strengthens the School's ambition to build a world-class research centre in Business and Society.

DCU Sport: In 2024/25, DCU was named Sports College of the Year at the Student Sport Ireland Awards. In addition to supporting dual-career athletes to successfully balance their academic and sporting commitments, DCU has over 36 sport clubs with 6,282 members across a range of disciplines, catering to all students from casual players to elite level athletes. Sporting highlights in 2024/25 included winning the Sigerson Cup and the O'Connor Cup, the top men's and women's collegiate Gaelic football competition, taking home the SSI Brendan Johnston Cup in men's rugby and the SSI/IRFU Cup in women's rugby, and achieving athletics gold at the Irish University Athletics Association Championships. The work of DCU Sport is advanced by sponsor Azets Ireland, DCU Sport Scholarship Fund supporters Fidelity Investments and Londis, and Decathlon, promoting student physical activity and empowering student athletes to excel.





Focus On: DCU Polaris

Polaris, DCU's new landmark building, unites science, health, and engineering under one roof—featuring cutting-edge labs, collaborative spaces, and a net-zero energy design at the heart of campus innovation.

Unveiled by Taoiseach Michéal Martin in April 2025, Polaris is designed to take DCU's teaching, learning and research in STEM subjects to the next level. With 10,000 square metres of floor space, Polaris can accommodate over 3,000 students from the Faculty of Science and Health, and the Faculty of Engineering and Computing.

Polaris now includes a High Performance Lab focused on research with elite athletes, a LifeLab to help children and teenagers develop improved health literacy, and a Movement Lab that provides state-of-the-art indoor sport facilities for students of physical education, sport science and athletic therapy. Meanwhile, in the Biomechanics Lab, researchers have a purpose-built environment to study, analyse and record human movement.

Dr Sarahjane Belton was Head of the School of Health and Human Performance during the planning phase of the project. Previously, staff at the school operated in four different buildings. With colleagues all in one facility, the benefits for research are already clear. "That's already fostering links and cross-collaboration, which we were pretty good at, but now it's going to explode," says Dr Belton.



“It's lovely and bright and clean. You have everything you need, and it's a really great place to do work and be productive.”

Rían Gill, Mechatronic Engineering student

Now that it is complete, Polaris has an 'A' Energy Rating and is designed to be a Net Zero Energy building, with heat pump technology, solar panels on the roof, and a rain collection system that irrigates the landscaping around the building. “It's the first building in DCU that's fully electric, so we're not using any fossil fuels,” says Alan Mangan of DCU Estates, who was Polaris Project Manager.

As well as its advanced teaching and learning spaces and lecture theatres, a great deal of thought was put into providing social spaces for students.

“It comes down to how people move through the building and how they interact with each other,” remarks Alan Mangan.

Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Dr Jennifer Bruton, says Polaris provides an ideal platform to involve key industry and international partners.

“The Faculty has always been highly engaged with industry, enterprise, and overseas partnerships. In Polaris, we have a new set of networked purpose-built spaces, such as the Industry Robotics Lab and the Internet of Things Lab, where we can effectively support research-led, future-focused engineering education that includes both physical and virtual stakeholder involvement in content design and delivery, challenge-based projects, and student exhibitions. It marks a new and invigorating era for the faculty.”

Philanthropic supporters of this innovative space for teaching, learning and research include the Sunflower Charitable Foundation, the Wright Family, and Intel Ireland. As our new facility begins to unlock new possibilities, opportunities are continuing to develop for visionary partners to be part of the Polaris story.

Taoiseach Michéal Martin at the launch of DCU Polaris



Focus On: Excellence and Opportunity - Aaron's Story

Support from the DCU Access Programme helped Aaron pursue his dream of becoming a teacher. Now, he wants to inspire other young people from a Traveller background to reach their potential. In 2024/25, over 1,000 students like Aaron were supported by the DCU Access Programme.

"College was not on my mind at all at 15. I always loved reading, but I didn't have the best experience in secondary school. In third year, I developed a heart condition that needed surgery and I missed a lot of days, including my Junior Certificate exams. That really put me on the back foot.

After everything, I wanted to leave school altogether. I could see other lads from the Traveller community were leaving, and at first, I didn't see a reason to stay. It was my mam who wouldn't let me give up. I had a guidance counsellor in school who believed in me too, and he encouraged me to apply for a Post Leaving Certificate course and follow that route to college.

I was able to get a place on a Level 5 course, and I finally graduated with one of the highest grades in my class. To go from missing school to being really good at something felt amazing. It meant I could apply for my place here in DCU.

I'm in my third year now, studying Religious Education and History. Once I realised I could make it to university, I knew I wanted to use this opportunity to help other young people.

"I want to be a teacher, the kind my guidance counsellor was: someone who will do things a bit differently and encourage students who aren't expecting themselves to stay in education to really see it as an option."

The support of the Access Programme means I can afford the books and supplies I need to keep doing well in college. I'd rely on the scholarship and what I earn working part-time to keep a lot of the worry off.

I think college is about more than what you learn in lectures or on placement. I've gained a lot of self-confidence here too, and I was very proud to be elected Class Representative by my class.

I was the first in my family to go to university, and I can already see the influence that's had on my younger sister. She wants to be an English teacher, and I think seeing how I got here will make that path easier for her to follow."



Focus On: Excellence and Opportunity – PulsePath Entrepreneurs

For their final-year project, Computing for Business students Zeynep Altintas and Lizel Sulaj created an app for monitoring crowd control at outdoor events. This promising business idea won them the Mallin Entrepreneurship Award, a seed fund for students created by DCU alumna and entrepreneur Liavin Mallin.



Developing market-ready products is part of the programme for final-year students on DCU's Computing for Business course. As music fans and regular festival attendees, entrepreneurial students Zeynep and Lizel drew their product inspiration from the all-too-familiar issue of festival queues.

"We go to festivals all the time, and if we were to know what queues were less busy, we could spend our time watching the artists perform, instead of wasting 40 minutes in toilet queues," Lizel explains. The students spotted a gap in the crowd control market. According to Lizel, "There's nothing that's hardware-free for festivals or outdoor events – and that's when we realised that we had somewhat of a unique idea."

Their product, PulsePath, is a web application designed to enhance crowd safety and resource management at medium- to large-scale open-air festivals. The platform provides real-time crowd density insights, enabling organisers to monitor congestion, improve response times, and allocate staff and amenities more efficiently. As Zeynep explains, she and Lizel created PulsePath from the ground up: "We were able to create the product, work on the business analysis and the coding side and everything else that goes into it."

The pair put their project forward for the Mallin Entrepreneurship Award, which offers seed funding and mentorship – and their belief in PulsePath proved to be justified. Now based in an office in DCU Polaris, the duo are exploring feasibility and commercialisation funding that can take their idea to the next level.

Along with significant seed funding, winning the Mallin Entrepreneurship Award has given them an invaluable chance to meet other entrepreneurs and experts who can offer advice and support. "The guidance is the biggest thing, I think" Lizel says. "It's a great way to have a first venture into the entrepreneurship world."



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