

Dundalk Institute of Technology

Annual Report

2023 – 2024



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1. Mission and Vision Statements



Mission and Vision Statements

DkIT'S Strategy Plan 2024-2028 sets out a vision and plan for the Institute which evokes a sense of common purpose as a positive driving force in the educational, economic, social and cultural development of the region it serves. The strategy sets out the Institute's ambition to proactively position itself within the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) landscape in achieving university status through the development of a strategic collaborative partnership with a university. The overarching aim of such a collaboration is to achieve greater scale and enhanced provision (in teaching and learning, research and innovation and engagement) to meet the ever-changing and dynamic needs of the region served.

Mission

DkIT provides quality, accessible and inclusive student-centred practice-based higher education and apprenticeship provision to meet the educational, social, economic and cultural development of the North-East and cross-border region and beyond.

Vision

To be a sustainable, accessible and impactful University campus of choice for students, employers and the community in the region and beyond.

2. History & Strategic Developments



Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) was founded in 1970 and has earned its reputation as the leading higher education provider in the North Leinster-South Ulster of Ireland region through its first-class teaching and learning, research and enterprise engagement. Set in an 87-acre campus in Dundalk, County Louth, DkIT provides quality educational and training opportunities to approximately 6,000 students across four Schools in Business & Humanities, Health & Science, Engineering and Informatics & Creative Arts from undergraduate and master's degrees to PhD level as well as craft apprenticeship provision. DkIT also offers a range of part-time academic and vocational programmes to the community aimed at helping students to enhance career development and personal growth.

Strategic Developments

DkIT Strategic Plan 2024-2025 was finalised and approved by Governing Body in January 2024. DkIT's Strategic Plan 2024–2028 focuses on a number of key strategic pillars: (1) Sectoral and Tertiary Coherence; (2) Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Quality of Student Experience; (3) Widening Access and Participation; (4) Excellence in Research and Innovation (R&I) and (5) Enhanced Engagement. These pillars are underpinned by the key enablers of People and Culture and Organisational Excellence with the embedded strategic themes of Sustainability and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Institute places, at the centre of its strategy, the student and the student experience in delivering work-ready, globally-minded graduates with the necessary skills and attributes to work and live in an ever-changing world.

A significant and overarching strategic priority for DkIT is to achieve University status. This will future-proof the Institute as a key strategic stakeholder in meeting the educational, economic, social and cultural needs of the region. Central to this pillar is the opportunity for our students to choose to study and graduate with a university award in the North-East region. In doing so, the Institute will ensure

that greater numbers of students are attracted to the region and will contribute to economic, social and cultural fabric within our communities by choosing to stay and work in the region after they graduate. University awards for our students is critical in ensuring the global recognition of their educational achievements. This status will drive research and innovation and enhance the talent pool for distinctive regional clusters. University status can only be achieved through the development of a strategic alliance with an existing university. Any such alliance would require that the enhanced regional remit would benefit exponentially from such a partnership. A key strategic development in 2023-2024 was the Institute's engagement with Maynooth University to explore a strategic engagement, the outcome of which is to deliver on a value added proposition in terms of: (1) strategically connecting regions and further enhancing regional impact through the identification and delivery of joint collaborative initiatives of mutual benefit in teaching and learning, research and innovation and engagement; (2) in significantly scaling, via such collaborative engagements, such that the region and its constituent stakeholders can avail of an enhanced higher education offering; and (3) delivering on competitive advantage to provide a credible and sustainable higher education institution in a broader catchment area.

The Institute submitted its application under the HEA's Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF) and received €3.2 million in funding to advance its strategic objectives in the areas of:

- Strategic Engagement with Maynooth University
- The Climate Action Roadmap implementation
- Supporting of research students
- Enhancement of the website and IT infrastructure for increased security and overall performance.

A key outcome of this funding was the signing in June 2024 of a Letter of Intent between Maynooth University and DkIT to explore the nature of the strategic engagement and timeframes between the two institutions.



During this reporting year, the Institute engaged in the development of its System Performance Agreement with the HEA. The development of the Performance Agreement was interconnected and interlinked to the development of the Strategic Plan 2024–2028. A number of core principles have been adopted: (1) achieving university designation; (2) serving our region to include employers, enterprise and community; (3) serving our students; (4) deepening our engagement with the Further Education (FE) sector; (5) strengthening existing relationships and building new alliances with key partners in Northern Ireland and internationally; and (6) achieving sustainability. This Performance Agreement will be used by the HEA to measure and assess the strategic performance of the institution via an annual cycle of reporting against the agreement and Strategy and Performance Dialogue. The final DkIT System Performance Agreement 2024-2028 set out four key performance objectives across teaching and learning, research and innovation, access and participation and engagement. The final agreement was signed in December 2024.

3. Chairperson's Statement



The academic year 2023–2024 marked a period of growth and meaningful progress across every corner of the Institute and it has been a great privilege to have been associated with it.

On behalf of my fellow members, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to all students, staff, partners and wider community stakeholders whose dedication and input shaped our work. Their commitment has been instrumental in advancing DkIT's mission and in creating new opportunities for the Institute's future. In particular

I want to thank the President, Dr Diarmuid O Callaghan and his executive colleagues who oversee the work of the Institute on a daily basis with total diligence and great expertise. I also want to thank my colleagues on the Governing Body. They give generously of their time and wisdom in guiding the Institute as it shapes a strategic role for itself in the Irish higher education landscape.

This annual report captures just a fraction of the energy and dynamism evident throughout the year—on campus and across the region. From forging strategic partnerships to hosting events that celebrate the Institute's longstanding contribution to society, DkIT continues to strengthen its role as a key regional anchor for education, research, and innovation.

One of the year's proudest achievements was the conferring of awards to over 1,600 graduates across the four schools. I know they will make a profound contribution to our communities and beyond.

Looking ahead, the momentum of this past year gives us every reason to be hopeful and ambitious. DkIT is a community of possibilities—and together, we are building a future defined by purpose, inclusion, and excellence.

Professor Thomas Collins

Chairperson, Governing Body

Dundalk Institute of Technology

4. President's Statement



Since becoming President of Dundalk Institute of Technology in 2023, one of the most rewarding experiences has been meeting and working alongside the dedicated staff of DkIT. I have been deeply inspired by your passion, your ideas, and your shared commitment to shaping a better future for our Institute. These conversations have reaffirmed my belief that, together, we have the power to continue to transform DkIT into a truly exceptional place for both students and staff.

We have already seen this spirit in action across a number of transformative initiatives. In October 2023, we proudly launched the website for the **RiVeR Project** – an ambitious, ground-breaking initiative led by our Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years. This project, funded under the HEA Performance Funding Awards, represents a bold step forward in our commitment to tackling domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence through research, education, and cross-sector collaboration.

Our involvement in the **N-TUTORR project** continues to flourish through 2023 and into 2024, as part of a national collaboration within the technological higher education sector. Backed by the European Union and NextGenerationEU, the project focuses on six key priority themes designed to enhance learning, teaching, and student experience.

In recognition of our commitment to equity and inclusion, the **School of Engineering** was awarded the prestigious **Athena Swan Bronze Award** – a significant milestone in our ongoing journey towards gender equality. In line with this, our Institute proudly signed the **Anti-Racism Principles** during Diversity Week, further embedding our dedication to diversity, respect, and social responsibility.

Our campus has also become a beacon for scientific discovery and inspiration. In November 2023, we were honoured to officially name our new STEM building after renowned astrophysicist **Professor Jocelyn Bell Burnell**, with Professor Bell herself and Minister Simon Harris T.D. joining us for this historic occasion.

Looking ahead, 2024 marks another turning point as we signed a **Letter of Intent with Maynooth University**. This strategic partnership signals our shared ambition to explore joint initiatives and to shape a more interconnected and collaborative future for Irish higher education. This is just the start of an exciting journey of collaboration that will be quite significant for our students in the future.

Each of these examples are milestones that tell a story of progress. As we continue to build on these achievements, I am filled with confidence in what we can achieve together. Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey.

Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan
President,
Dundalk Institute of Technology

5. Governance

The Governing Body is collectively responsible for leading and directing the Institutes' activities and fulfils key functions, including: reviewing and guiding strategic direction and major plans of action, risk management policies and procedures, annual budgets and business plans, setting performance objectives, monitoring implementation and Institute performance, and overseeing major capital expenditure and investment decisions.

The Governing Body acts on a fully informed and ethical basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the Institute, having due regard to its legal responsibilities and the objectives set by Government.

5.1 Membership of Governing Body & Meetings

Schedule of Governing Body Meetings and Governing Body Member's Attendance between 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

Governing Body Member	Role	No of Governing Body meetings attended	No of Governing Body meetings eligible to attend
Dr Tom Collins	Chairperson	7	7
Mr Patrick Malone	Chairperson /Member	9	9
Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan	President (Ex Officio Member)	9	9
Ms Anna Shakespeare	Member	7	9
Mr Bill Sweeney	Member	8	9
Dr Jennifer Brennan	Member	5	7
Ms Anne Marie Lacey	Member	7	7
Mr Richard Hanlon	Member	6	7
Dr Fiona Lawless	Member Academic Staff	8	9
Mr Fergus Grimes	Member Non Academic Staff	9	9
Ms Ciara O'Shea	Member Non Academic Staff	6	7
Mr Pat McCormick	Member Academic Staff	6	7
Ms Antoinette Rourke	Member Academic Staff	7	7
Ms Amanda Jane Gainford	Member	1	2
ClIr Clifford Kelly	Member	2	2
Mr Nick Killian	Member	1	2
Ms Isabell Murphy	Member	0	2
Ms April Anna Barker	Member	1	2
Ms Brenda McGeeney	Member	2	2
Ms Sadie Ward McDermott	Member	1	2
Ms Marianne Lyons	Member	2	2
Mr Eoin Clarke	Member Student Union	6	6
Ms Holly Lambe Sally	Member Student Union	7	7
Mr Mark Lee	Member Student Union	2	6
Ms Tobi Bewaji	Member Student Union	1	1
Mr Gerard O'Brien	Member Student Union	1	1

- Dr Tom Collins replaced Mr Patrick Malone as chairperson on 12 December 2023, new Governing Body started in December 2023
- Ms Holly Lambe Sally replaced Mr Eoin Clarke as the Student Union President on 01 July 2024
- Ms Tobi Bewaji & Mr Gerard O'Brien replaced Mark Lee and Holly Lambe on 01 July 2024.
- Mr Pat McCormick and Ms Antoinette Rourke joined Governing Body on 12 December 2023.

The following members were members of Governing Body from 01 September 2023 to 07 November 2023, terms ended.

- Ms Amanda Jane Gainford
- Cllr Clifford Kelly
- Mr Nick Killian
- Ms Isabell Murphy
- Ms April Anna Barker
- Ms Brenda McGeeney
- Ms Sadie Ward McDermott
- Ms Marianne Lyons

5.2 Governing Body Meeting's Minutes

A copy of all Governing Body meeting minutes are available on the Institute's website: <https://www.DKIT.ie/about-DKIT/institute-reports-and-publications/governing-body-meeting-notes.html>

5.3 Governing Body Expenses

The following fees and/or expenses paid to members of the Governing Body are in accordance with guidelines from the Department of Finance.

Governing Body Member	Expenses	Interview Fees	Employer PRSI	Total Paid
Mr William Sweeney	-	€5,400.00	€562.95	€5,962.95
Ms Brenda McGeeney	-	€4,200.00	€430.35	€4,630.35
Ms Ann Marie Lacey	€437.87	€3,600.00	€416.08	€4,453.95
Dr Jennifer Brennan	€55.52	-	-	€55.52
Total Paid	€493.39	€13,200.00	€1,409.38	€15,102.77

5.4 Institute Executive Board

The following are all those who were a member of the Executive Board at 31 August 2024 to include their term of office during the year:

Name	Role
Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan	President (appointed on 2 January 2023)
Dr. Breda Brennan	Head of School of Engineering
Dr. Sheila Flanagan	Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar
Dr. Edel Healy	Head of School of Health & Science (01 September 2023 – 30 June 2024) DkIT – Maynooth Executive Project Lead (appointed July 2024)
Dr Moira Maguire	Head of School of Health & Science (appointed July 2024)
Dr. Patricia Moriarty	Head of School of Business & Humanities
Prof. Fergal McCaffrey	Head of School of Informatics & Creative Arts
Ms. Irene McCausland	Vice President of Strategic Planning, Communications & Development
Mr. Hugh Nolan	Vice President for Finance, Resources & Diversity

Heads of Department/Section

Name	Role
Dr Brian Boyd	Head of Dept of Business Studies
Mr Shane Hill	Head of Dept of Management & Financial Studies
Dr Annaleigh Margey	Head of Dept of Humanities
Dr Kevin Burns	Head of Dept of Hospitality
Dr Fiona Lawless	Head of Dept of Computing & Mathematics
Dr Adele Commins	Head of Dept of Creative Arts, Media & Music
Dr Martin McHugh	Head of Dept of Visual & Human Centred Computing
Dr Paul MacArtain	Head of Dept of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering
Ms Denise Quigley	Head of Dept of Built Environment
Mr Pat McCormick	Head of Dept of Engineering Trades/Civil Engineering
Dr Gillian Lambe	Head of Dept of Life & Health Sciences
Dr Siobhan Jordan	Head of Dept of Agriculture, Food & Animal Health
Dr Briega King	Head of Dept of Nursing Midwifery & Early Years
Mr Simon O'Neill	Head of Section Eng Trades
Mr Gerard Galligan	Head of Section Eng Trades

Heads of Function

Name	Role
Mr Aidan Browne	Head of Innovation & Business Development
Mr Gerald O Driscoll	Human Resource Manager
Mr Conor Lait	Estates Manager
Mr Anton Barrett	Head of Lifelong Learning
Ms Lynda McQuaid	Head of Marketing & Communication
Ms Marie Madigan	Finance Manager
Mr Stuart Quinn	Financial Analyst
Mr James McCahill	IT Manager
Dr Brendan Ryder	Head of Academic Planning & Quality Assurance
Ms Linda Murphy	Academic & Student Affairs Manager
Mr Frank Brady	Head Librarian
Dr Tim McCormac	Head of Research & Graduate Studies
Mr Gerry Gallagher	Head of Teaching & Learning
Ms Noreen Carney	International Officer

5.5 Organisational Structure

A copy of the Institute's Organisational Chart is available at: [dkit_organisation_chart.pdf](#)

6. Academic & Student Affairs

6.1 Academic Council Membership until March 2024:

Dr. Brian Boyd	Dr. Myles Hackett	Dr. Tim Mc Cormac
Dr. Conor Brady	Dr. Edel Healy	Mr. Pat Mc Cormick
Mr. Frank Brady	Mr. Shane Hill	Dr. Martin Mc Hugh
Dr. Breda Brennan	Mr. Kevin Irwin	Ms. Emer Mc Kenna
Dr. Kevin Burns	Dr. Siobhan Jordan	Mr. Noel Mc Kenna
Dr. Anita Byrne	Dr. Gillian Lambe	Mr. Donal McMorland
Mr. Eoin Clancy	Dr. Fiona Lawless	Dr. Matthew Molloy
Mr. Dermot Clarke	Mr. Mark Lee	Dr. Patricia Moriarty
Mr. Eoin Clarke	Dr. Thomas Lupton	Mr. Peter Morris
Dr. Adele Commins	Dr. Ronan Lynch	Ms. Paula Mullen
Ms. Karen Commins	D. Paul MacCartan	Dr. Kieran Nolan
Dr. Bernard Drumm	Dr. Moira Maguire	Dr. Diarmuid O Callaghan
Mr. Lorcan Dunne	Dr. Annaleigh Margey	Ms. Deirdre O Malley
Ms. Sinead Dunne	Mr. Pat Mc Ardle	Mr. John Reid
Dr. Jennifer Fegan	Ms. Emma Mc Caffrey	Ms. Antoinette Rourke
Dr. Sheila Flanagan	Prof. Fergal Mc Caffrey	Dr. Brendan Ryder
Mr. Peter Gosling	Ms. Siobhan Mc Carthy	
Dr. Peadar Grant	Ms. Irene Mc Causland	

Academic Council membership from March – August 2024:

Dr	Diana	Bogusevschi	Dr	Tim	Mc Cormac
Dr.	Conor	Brady	Mr	Pat	Mc Cormick
Mr	Frank	Brady	Dr	Martin	Mc Hugh
Dr	Ronan	Bree	Dr.	Ruth	Mc Keever
Dr	Breda	Brennan	Dr	Kevin	Mc Kenna
Dr	Kevin	Burns	Dr	Patricia	Moriarty
Dr	Anita	Byrne	Ms	Linda	Murphy
Ms	Maeve	Caraher	Dr.	Kieran	Nolan
Mr	Dermot	Clarke	Mr.	Ger	O'Brien
Dr	Adele	Commins	Dr	Diarmuid	O Callaghan
Ms	Karen	Commins	Ms.	Deirdre	O Malley
Dr	Coleman	Dennehy	Ms	Teresa	O Rourke
Ms.	Sinead	Dunne	Ms	Michelle	O Shea
Dr	Sheila	Flanagan	Dr.	Maxwell Yeboah	Owusu-Twum
Ms	Amy	Flood	Mr	Shane	Hill
Dr	Gerry	Gallagher	Dr	Siobhan	Jordan
Dr	Joe	Gildea	Ms	Briege	King
Mr	Peter	Gosling	Dr	Gillian	Lambe
Prof.	Collette	Henry	Ms	Holly	Lambe-Sally
Ms	Helen	Howley	Dr	Fiona	Lawless
Dr	Paul	MacCartan	Dr	Jade	Pollock
Dr	Moira	Maguire	Ms	Denise	Quigley
Dr	Annaleigh	Margey	Mr.	John	Reid
Dr.	Eamonn	Martin	Mr	Conor	Reidy
Dr	Fergal	Mc Caffrey	Ms	Eimear	Rice
Ms	Irene	Mc Causland	Ms	Kayla	Rush
Ms	Catherine	Mc Closkey	Dr	Brendan	Ryder

6.2 Academic Council Meetings

A copy of Academic Council meeting minutes are available on the Institute's website:
<https://www.DKIT.ie/about-DKIT/governance/academic-council>

6.3 Programme Validations 2023

This report provides a summary of the following approvals completed by the Registrar's Office for the academic year 2023/2024:

- Programme Validations.
- Module Validations.
- Off-Campus Venues for Programme Delivery.

6.3.1 School: Business and Humanities

Department	Programme Title	Award Type	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode	Validation Type	Academic Council Ratification Date
Business Studies	<i>Master of Business in Strategic Data Analytics for Business</i>	Masters Degree	9	90	Full-time, Part-time, Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended, Full-time Online, Part-time Online.	New	23/02/2024 (AC Meeting No. 191)
Business Studies	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Strategic Data Analytics for Business (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60	Full-time, Part-time, Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended, Full-time Online, Part-time Online.	New	23/02/2024 (AC Meeting No. 191)

6.3.2 School: Engineering

Department	Programme Title	Award Type	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode	Validation Type	Academic Council Ratification Date
Built Environment	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying</i>	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	240	Full-time, Modular.	New	26/04/2024 (AC Meeting No. 192)
Built Environment	<i>Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180	Full-time, Modular.	New	26/04/2024 (AC Meeting No. 192)
Built Environment	<i>Higher Certificate in Science in Quantity Surveying (Embedded Exit Award)</i>	Higher Certificate	6	120	Full-time, Modular.	New	26/04/2024 (AC Meeting No. 192)
Engineering Trades and Civil Engineering	<i>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in International Civil Engineering</i>	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	240	Full-time Blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)

6.3.3 School: Health and Science

Department	Programme Title	Award Type	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode	Validation Type	Academic Council Ratification Date
Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Master of Science in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation</i>	Masters Degree	9	90	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)

Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Certificate in Operations Management and the Production of Innovative and Sustainable Food Products</i>	Certificate	9	20	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Certificate in Compliance and Continuous Improvement in Sustainable Food Manufacturing</i>	Certificate	9	20	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Master of Science in Community Mental Health Nursing</i>	Masters Degree	9	90	Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Community Mental Health Nursing (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60	Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in Science in Nursing in Community Mental Health Nursing (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Certificate	9	30	Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in Trauma Informed Care</i>	Certificate	9	10	Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</i>	Certificate	8	20	Part-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)

6.3.4 School: Informatics and Creative Arts

Department	Programme Title	Award Type	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode	Validation Type	Academic Council Ratification Date
Computing Science and Mathematics	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Applied Data Science</i>	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online,	New	23/02/2024 (AC Meeting No. 191)

					Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.		
Computing Science and Mathematics	<i>Certificate in Data Analytics with Python (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Certificate	9	20	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online, Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.	New	23/02/2024 (AC Meeting No. 191)
Computing Science and Mathematics	<i>Postgraduate Certificate in Data Analytics and Visualisations (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Postgraduate Certificate	9	30	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online, Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.	New	23/02/2024 (AC Meeting No. 191)
Computing Science and Mathematics	<i>Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Artificial Intelligence (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Postgraduate Certificate	9	30	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online, Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.	New	23/02/2024 (AC Meeting No. 191)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music and Performance Technologies</i>	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	240	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Music and Performance Technologies (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Higher Certificate in Arts in Music and Performance Technologies (Exit Award)</i>	Higher Certificate	6	120	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sound Design</i>	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	240	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)

Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Sound Design (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Design (Exit Award)</i>	Higher Certificate	6	120	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Development</i>	Honours Bachelor Degree	8	240	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Audio Development (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7	180	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Creative Arts, Media and Music	<i>Higher Certificate in Arts in Audio Development (Exit Award)</i>	Higher Certificate	6	120	Full-time, Part-time.	New	24/05/2024 (AC Meeting No. 193)
Visual and Human-Centred Computing	<i>Master of Science in Digital Health Innovation</i>	Masters Degree	9	90	Full-time, full-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Visual and Human-Centred Computing	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Health Innovation (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60	Full-time, full-time blended.	New	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)
Visual and Human-Centred Computing	<i>Master of Science in Computing in Medical Device Software Engineering</i>	Masters Degree	9	90	Full-time online, Part-time online.	Differential	20/06/2024 (AC Meeting No. 194)

6.4.5 Off-Campus Venues for Programme Delivery

Module Validations : There were no module validations in 2023-2024.

Off-Campus Venues for Programme Delivery : There were no off-campus venues approved for programme delivery in 2023-2024.

6.5 Enrolment Statistics 2023/24

The following sets out the enrolment figures for academic year 2023-2024.

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Postgrad	Total
Full-time						
Business & Humanities	551	327	286	117	36	1,317
Engineering	195	139	123	110	72	639
Informatics & Creative Arts	310	244	175	114	51	894
Health & Science	432	270	265	257	47	1,271
Subtotal	1,488	980	849	598	206	4,121
Part-time						
Business & Humanities	142	1	14	19	6	182
Engineering	69	0	4	30	4	107
Informatics & Creative Arts	279	3			60	342
Health and Science	220	23	28	36	159	466
Subtotal	710	27	46	85	229	1,097
Total	2,198	1,007	895	683	435	5,218

6.6 Graduation



Conferring ceremonies took place on campus in the Faulkner Hall at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) on Thursday 31st October and 1st November 2024. There were 6 ceremonies in total. The conferring ceremonies were recorded and are available publicly at <https://www.dkit.ie/study/awards-office/graduation/graduation-ceremonies-archive/>.

A total of **1,637** students across the four Schools graduated in 2024 as follows (includes all awards, full-time and part-time; only awards of 30 ECTS credits or more are invited to attend a conferring ceremony):

School / Centre	Total
School of Business and Humanities	469
School of Engineering	238
School of Health and Science	628
School of Informatics and Creative Arts	292
Lifelong Learning Centre	10
Grand Total	1637

* Programmes from CELT are associated with LLL.

This was an increase of 56 from 2023 (total number graduated in 2023 was 1,581).

Total Graduated (by NFQ Level)

NFQ Level	Total
6	122
7	457
8	802
9	244
10	12
Grand Total	1637

* *NFQ Level 10 relate to postgraduate research students who received Doctorate awards. Graduates who received Master by Research awards are included in the NFQ Level 9 figures (see section Postgraduate Research Students breakdown below, Total Graduated (by NFQ Level, Award Classification))*

Total Graduated (by Gender)

School / Centre	F	M	N	blank	Grand Total
School of Business and Humanities	247	210	5	7	469
School of Engineering	47	185		6	238
School of Health and Science	482	123	2	21	628
School of Informatics and Creative Arts	116	170		6	292
Lifelong Learning Centre	4	4		2	10
Grand Total	896	692	7	42	1637

* *"F" – Female; "M" – Male; "N" - Undeclared; Blank indicates no gender is provided in the Student Management System (Banner).*

Total Graduated (by NFQ Level, Award Classification)

NFQ Level / Award Classification	Total
6	122
Pass	4
Pass with Distinction	16
Pass with Merit - Grade 1	10
Pass with Merit - Grade 2	2
Unclassified	90
7	457
Pass	52
Pass with Distinction	68
Pass with Merit - Grade 1	116
Pass with Merit - Grade 2	63
Unclassified	158
8	802
First Class Honours	136
Pass	62
Second Class Honours Grade 1	332
Second Class Honours Grade 2	161
Unclassified	111
9	244
First Class Honours	28
Merit	14
Pass	61
Pass with Distinction	16
Second Class Honours	27
Unclassified	95
<i>Masters by Research</i> ¹	3
10	12
<i>Doctorate</i>	12
Grand Total	1637

¹ PGR students have no award classification (i.e., blank)

Award Classification (by School, NFQ Level, Award Classification)

NFQ Level / Award Classification	Total
School of Business and Humanities	469
6	50
Pass	3
Pass with Distinction	15
Pass with Merit - Grade 1	9
Pass with Merit - Grade 2	2
Unclassified	21
7	155
Pass	10

Pass with Distinction	22
Pass with Merit - Grade 1	45
Pass with Merit - Grade 2	21
Unclassified	57
8	241
First Class Honours	28
Pass	24
Second Class Honours Grade 1	91
Second Class Honours Grade 2	63
Unclassified	35
9	23
First Class Honours	4
Merit	3
Pass	6
Pass with Distinction	3
Second Class Honours	6
<i>Master of Arts by Research ¹</i>	1
School of Engineering	238
6	30
Pass	1
Unclassified	29
7	50
Pass	16
Pass with Distinction	5
Pass with Merit - Grade 1	10
Pass with Merit - Grade 2	11
Unclassified	8
8	101
First Class Honours	16
Pass	16
Second Class Honours Grade 1	41
Second Class Honours Grade 2	28
9	56
First Class Honours	2
Merit	7
Pass	38
Pass with Distinction	5
Second Class Honours	3
Unclassified	1
10	1
<i>Doctorate</i>	1
School of Health and Science	628
6	14
Pass with Distinction	1

Pass with Merit - Grade 1	1
Unclassified	12
7	138
Pass	17
Pass with Distinction	26
Pass with Merit - Grade 1	35
Pass with Merit - Grade 2	18
Unclassified	42
8	343
First Class Honours	65
Pass	19
Second Class Honours Grade 1	148
Second Class Honours Grade 2	40
Unclassified	71
9	124
First Class Honours	3
Merit	3
Pass	6
Pass with Distinction	8
Second Class Honours	8
Unclassified	94
<i>Master of Science by Research</i>	2
10	9
<i>Doctorate</i>	9
School of Informatics and Creative Arts	292
6	28
Unclassified	28
7	114
Pass	9
Pass with Distinction	15
Pass with Merit - Grade 1	26
Pass with Merit - Grade 2	13
Unclassified	51
8	117
First Class Honours	27
Pass	3
Second Class Honours Grade 1	52
Second Class Honours Grade 2	30
Unclassified	5
9	31
First Class Honours	16
Merit	1
Pass	8
Second Class Honours	6
10	2
<i>Doctorate</i>	2

Lifelong Learning Centre ²	10
9	10
First Class Honours	3
Pass	3
Second Class Honours	4
Grand Total	1637

1 PGR graduates are identified as "Doctorate", "Master of Science by Research", "Master of Arts by Research". 2 Programmes from CELT are associated with LLL

Prize Winners

President's Prizes and School Prizes were awarded in 2024:

President's Prizes *

Prize	Total
<i>Academic Excellence</i>	73 (see listing below)
<i>Enterprising Student of the Year (Individual)</i>	1
<i>Enterprising Student of the Year (Group)</i>	Not awarded in 2024
<i>Contribution to the Life of the Institute or the Community</i>	Not awarded in 2024

** Prize winners received a specially commissioned medal.*

President's Prizes were awarded to the following graduates in 2024:

School	Student Name		Programme Title	Programme Code	NFQ Level	Prize
Engineering	Padraic	Bellew	<i>Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering</i>	DK_EMCHL_7	7	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Kian	O'Brien	<i>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering</i>	DK_EMENG_8	8	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Jinyan	Yang	<i>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electrical & Electronic Engineering</i>	DK_EELEG_8	8	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Mark	Crothers Olusanya	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Engineering Entrepreneurship</i>	DK_EENTR_8	8	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Aaron	Lynch	<i>Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering</i>	DK_ECIVL_7	7	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Mark	Nilan	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Civil Engineering</i>	DK_ECIVL_8	8	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Aisling	Blakemore	<i>Bachelor of Science in Construction Management</i>	DK_ECMGT_7	7	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Jodie	Duffy	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management</i>	DK_ECMGT_8	8	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Sarah	Murphy	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying</i>	DK_EBSUR_8	8	Academic Excellence
Engineering	David	Carroll	<i>Master of Science in Building Surveying</i>	DK_EBSUR_9	9	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Rachel	Cribbin	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Building Surveying</i>	DK_ESBUI_9	9	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Mark	Kelly	<i>Master of Science in Renewable Energy Systems</i>	DK_ERENE_9	9	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Sean	Matthews	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Arts</i>	DK_HARTS_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Dara	McLaughlin	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Community Youth Work</i>	DK_HCYWO_7	7	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Richard	Martin	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care</i>	DK_HSOCA_8	8	Academic Excellence

Business and Humanities	Cara	Fay	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Youth Work</i>	DK_HYOWO_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Ellen	Murphy	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance</i>	DK_BBAAF_B	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Natalie	Erbenova	<i>Bachelor of Business (Honours)</i>	DK_BBUST_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Jiri	Nemeth	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Digital Marketing and Public Relations</i>	DK_BDMPR_7	7	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Patricia	Kavas	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts</i>	DK_BCULA_7	7	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Mark	McGowan	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hospitality Management</i>	DK_BHOPT_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Quetshia	Madiata	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Event Management</i>	DK_BEVNT_7	7	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Eoin	Murphy	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Event Management</i>	DK_BEVNT_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Nghiem	Phuong Linh	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management</i>	DK_BHPMG_7	7	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Evan	Kane	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hospitality Management</i>	DK_BHPMG_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Barbora	Melounova	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Tourism Management</i>	DK_BINTM_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Nayla	Sadiq	<i>Bachelor of Business in Business and Management</i>	DK_BBSMG_7	7	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Stephen	Sharkey	<i>Bachelor of Business in Business and Technology</i>	DK_BBSTY_7	7	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Archangela Janice	Noveline	<i>Master of Business in Entrepreneurship and Marketing</i>	DK_BBUSS_9	9	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Edel	Dwan	<i>Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) - Part Time</i>	DK_BBBSP_8	8	Academic Excellence
Business and Humanities	Nagisa	Muramoto	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Data Analytics for Business</i>	DK_BSTDJ_9	9	Academic Excellence

Health Science	and	Ciara	Smith	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food Production</i>	DK_NAAFP_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Amy	Boyd	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sustainable Agriculture</i>	DK_NASUS_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Stephen	O'Toole	<i>Bachelor of Science in Agriculture</i>	DK_NAAGR_7	7	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Lucy	Power	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Advanced Veterinary Nursing</i>	DK_NAVET_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Ciara	McGuinness	<i>Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing</i>	DK_NAVET_7	7	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Katie	Moran	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health and Physical Activity</i>	DK_NLPHA_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Corinne Kai	Leng Chew	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biopharmaceutical Science (Add On)</i>	DK_NLBIA_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Cathal	O'Gradaigh	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biopharmaceutical Science</i>	DK_NLBIO_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Ciaran	Brannigan	<i>Bachelor of Science in Applied Bioscience</i>	DK_NLBIO_7	7	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Anita	Chioma Ogueri	<i>Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical</i>	DK_NLPHS_7	7	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Nellie	Daly	<i>Higher Diploma in Science in Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing</i>	DK_NLMAN_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Clíodhna	McDonnell	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies</i>	DK_NNECS_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Imelda	Whyte	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies</i>	DK_NNAEC_7	7	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Louise	Sheils	<i>Master of Science in Professional Nursing</i>	DK_NNPRO_9	9	Academic Excellence
Health Science	and	Helena	O'Reilly	<i>Master of Science in Professional Practice</i>	DK_NNMPJ_9	9	Academic Excellence

Health and Science	Ruth	Quinlan	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Leadership & Management for the Early Years Sector</i>	DK_NNLME_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Clare	Kelly	<i>Higher Diploma in Arts in Teaching in Early Learning and Care for the FET Sector</i>	DK_NTELJ_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Rachel	Costello	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice (Professional Management of Complex Behaviour in Clinical Practice)</i>	DK_NNDPP_9	9	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Chloe	Doyle Burke	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing</i>	DK_NNGEN_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Rebecca	Foster	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing</i>	DK_NNMTL_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Sarah Jayne	Walsh	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability</i>	DK_NNIDN_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Emily	Boshell	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Midwifery</i>	DK_NNMID_8	8	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Andrea	Martinez	<i>Master of Science in Agricultural Biotechnology</i>	DK_NAMAB_9	9	Academic Excellence
Health and Science	Aoife	Hamell	<i>Higher Diploma in Science in Midwifery</i>	DK_NNHDS_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Marcos	Ventura	<i>Master of Science in Computing in Games and Extended Reality</i>	DK_IVGER_9	9	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	James	Kealy	<i>Master of Science in Computing in Computer Animation Production</i>	DK_IVCAP_9	9	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Luana	Kimley	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Software Development</i>	DK_IVSOF_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Prithvi	Muvvala	<i>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Development</i>	DK_IVMDV_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Caroline	Reen	<i>Higher Diploma in Science in Computing</i>	DK_ICCPT_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Eddie	Finnegan	<i>Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics</i>	DK_ICDPT_8	8	Academic Excellence

Informatics and Creative Arts	Jeremiah	Susanto	<i>Bachelor of Science in Computing</i>	DK_ICOMP_7	7	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Eimear	Mattison	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio and Music Production</i>	DK_IMAUD_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Abby	Murphy	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Media</i>	DK_IMMED_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Jessica	Thompson	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Film and TV Production</i>	DK_IMILM_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Rhiona	McPhelim	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music</i>	DK_IMMUC_8	8	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Katerina	Kricenska	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Creative Media</i>	DK_IMMED_7	7	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Sean	Caffrey	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Audio & Music Production</i>	DK_IMPMA_7	7	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Cathal	Mooney	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Theatre & Film Practice</i>	DK_IMTFP_7	7	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Bikushev	Gleb	<i>Master of Science in Data Analytics</i>	DK_ICDAN_9	9	Academic Excellence
Informatics and Creative Arts	Rhiona	McPhelim	<i>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music</i>	DK_IMMUC_8	8	Academic Excellence
Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)	Alan	Clarke	<i>Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching</i>	DK_UMLTJ_9	9	Academic Excellence
Engineering	Arán	Ralph	<i>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering</i>	DK_EMENG_8	8	Enterprising Student of the Year (Individual)

School Prizes *

The following school prizes were awarded to the following graduates in 2024

(as included in the Institute Prizes Register which was established in the academic year 2022/2023):

School	Prize	First name	Last name	Programme
Business and Humanities	<i>ACCA Prize for Academic Excellence on the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance</i>	Ellen	Murphy	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance
Business and Humanities	<i>Dundalk Credit Union Prize for Business Entrepreneurship</i>	Niamh	Mulholland	Master of Business in Entrepreneurship and Marketing
Business and Humanities	<i>Dundalk Credit Union Prize for Best Overall Student in Business and Management</i>	Nayla	Sadiq	Bachelor of Business in Business and Management
Business and Humanities	<i>Karl Mernagh Prize 2024</i>	Stephen	Sharkey	Bachelor of Business in Business and Technology
Business and Humanities	<i>ABP Ireland Prize for the Best Overall Culinary Arts Management Student</i>	Patricia	Kavas	Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts
Business and Humanities	<i>Association of Irish Professional Conference Organisers (AIPCO) Prize for the Best Overall Event Management Student</i>	Quetshia	Madiata	Bachelor of Arts in Event Management
Business and Humanities	<i>Bunzl McLaughlin Prize for the Best Overall Hospitality Management Student</i>	Ngheim Phuong	Linh	Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management
Business and Humanities	<i>Radisson Blu Royal Hotel Dublin Prize for the Best Research Paper</i>	Aine	Clarke	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Event Management
Engineering	<i>CARGOTEC Female Engineering Graduate 2024</i>	Mairead	O'Connor Heaney	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Civil Engineering
Health and Science	<i>ABP Prize for Agri-Food Student of the Year 2024</i>	Ciara	Smith	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sustainable Agri-Food Production

Health and Science	<i>Duggan Veterinary Prize for Excellence in Anaesthesia</i>	Niamh	Jones	Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing
Health and Science	<i>Shane Dromgoole Prize</i>	Gráinne	Durkan	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Advanced Veterinary Nursing
Health and Science	<i>Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) Veterinary Nursing Graduate of the Year 2024</i>	Ciara	McGuinness	Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing
Health and Science	<i>Geraldine Killeen Prize for Care, Compassion and Commitment in Intellectual Disability Nursing</i>	Kelsey	Callaghan	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing

* School Prize winners received a variety of prizes as deemed appropriate by the School or prize sponsor.

6.7 International Office

The International student registrations for 23/24: 438. By School:

- School of Business and Humanities: 156
- School of Informatics and Creative Arts: 145
- School of Engineering: 89
- School of Health and Science: 48

Key recruitment markets in 23/24 were:

- India (124 registered students)
- Africa (66 registered students)
- Malaysia & Indonesia (South East Asia): (77 registered students)
- China (31 registered students)
- Eastern Europe (36 NEW students recruited in 23/24)

New strategic initiatives in 23/24 included:

- Increase of the undergraduate international tuition fees by €1,000 to €10,950.
- Increase of postgraduate diploma tuition fee to €11,500.
- streamlining of scholarships awarded, so that students are getting one scholarship only (with the exception of the sibling discount).
- The number of accommodation discounts awarded was reduced to 150 per annum for new Year 1 students, with the amount is capped at €1400 per student.
- Direct payments to accommodation providers was ceased.
- Elimination of Engineering construction-related programme scholarships.
- Elimination of the Year 4 50% fee-reduction for Year 1 entrants commencing in 2024/2025, as progression to an add-on Honours Degree is now the norm, rather than the exception.
- TransferMate has been engaged as a payment-provider for new international applicants.
- Focused dialogue with recruitment Agents on more selected targeting and in-country counselling and monitoring of applicants, to focus on Quality over Quantity of applications and thereby improve conversions.

- A new DkIT Recruiter was appointed in September 2023 to develop Eastern European recruitment and to support international recruitment.
- The chief International Recruiter is on partial leave of absence in 23/24, and has been assigned to work 2 days/week for DkIT in 23/24.
- The new CRM applications portal was implemented for international applicants.
- Recruitment activities focused on the key markets of India, Africa, South East Asia, China and Eastern Europe.
- Development of the agent network in Latin America, as many of the LATAM countries don't need a study-visa for Ireland.
- A move-away from applications from Pakistan for the International Foundation Programme, due to the high visa refusal rate for IFP applicants.
- The Institute was successful in being selected as a participant in the Indonesia International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) programme, with 10 Indonesia scholarship students selected to study at the Department of Hospitality Studies of DkIT for one semester, with associated tuition fees paid for by IISMA.
- A joint DkIT Bachelor Degree programme in Civil Engineering with Hebei University of Engineering China is under development in 23/24.
- A review of agent contracts was carried out, the result of which is the following:
 - ◆ All normal commission-based contracts were standardised to 20% commission, with a new commission scale implemented for the International Foundation Programme.
 - ◆ The Regional Office agreement for South East Asia was terminated, with the change to a standard commission-based agent contract.
 - ◆ The management fee for the Regional Office in China was modified to a pro rata payment system, proportionate to the number of students recruited and will be paid once at the end of the recruitment cycle, rather than in quarterly instalments.
 - ◆ The Regional Office in Europe (Unilink) was maintained, with a pro-rata payment system in development.

Erasmus Incoming for Academic Year 23/24 broken down by School

School of Business and Humanities	30
School of Informatics and Creative Arts	16
School of Health and Science	9
School of Engineering	5
Total	60

Sending Universities 23/24

Erasmus Hogeschool	Belgium
University College South Denmark (USCD)	Denmark
Satakunta University of Applied Sciences	Finland
University of Grenoble-Alpes	France
IPAC Annecy	France
IUT Montpellier-Sete	France
Universite de Caen	France
Institut de Sup'Biotech de Paris	France
Universite Savoie Mont-Blanc	France
Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Westfaelische Hochschule	Germany
Trier University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Hochschule Nuertingen-Geisslingen	Germany
Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen (THM)	Germany
Konstanz University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Hochschule Harz	Germany
Hochschule Merseburg	Germany
Hochschule fuer Technik und Wirtschaft (HfTW) Berlin	Germany

Hochschule Niederrhein	Germany
Avans University of Applied Sciences	The Netherlands
Universidade de Maia	Portugal
Universidad Politecnica de Valencia	Spain
University of Worcester	UK

Erasmus Outbound Students – Study Abroad – Academic Year 23/24

DkIT Department	Destination	Duration	No. of Students
Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen, Germany	X1 semester	3
Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	Instituto Superior Politecnico Gaya, Portugal	X1 semester	2
Dept. Creative Arts	University of Kingston, UK	X1 semester	2
Dept. Creative Arts	Baltic Film and Media School, Estonia	X1 semester	1
Dept. Creative Arts	CEU Universidad San Pablo, Madrid, Spain	X1 semester	3
Dept. Mechanical and Electronic Engineering	Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences, Germany	X1 semester	1
Dept. Built Environment	Avans UAS, The Netherlands	X1 semester	1
Dept. Business Studies	Heilbronn UAS	X1 semester	1
Dept. Business Studies	Universidad Politecnica de Valencia, Spain	X1 academic year	1
Dept. Hospitality	Universidad Europea de Valencia, Spain	X1 semester	3
		TOTAL	18

Erasmus Outbound Students – Work-Placement – Academic Year 23/24

DkIT Department	Destination	Duration	No. of Students
Dept. Nursing Midwifery and Early Years (Midwifery)	University College South Denmark	X2 months	2
Dept. Nursing Midwifery and Early Years (Mental Health)	University College Lillebaelt Denmark	X2 months	2
Dept. Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years (General Nursing)	Satakunta UAS, Finland	X2 months	1
Dept. Hospitality Studies (Culinary Arts)	UMA Concept SL, Barcelona, Spain	X4 months	1
Dept. Hospitality Studies (Culinary Arts)	The Trump Macleod House and Lodge Hotel, Aberdeen Scotland	X4 months	1
Dept. Hospitality Studies (Culinary Arts)	The Dorchester Hotel, London	X4 months	1
Dept. Hospitality Studies (Event Management)	The Anthemus Sea Beach Hotel and Spa, Greece	X5 months	1
Dept. Electronic and Mechanical Engineering	Rittal Automation Systems GmbH, Germany	X3 months	1
Dept. Electronic and Mechanical Engineering	Pfeiffer Vacuum Components and Solutions GmbH, Germany	X3 months	1
Dept. Computing Science and Mathematics	MobiSec Italia, S.R.L	X3 months	1
Dept. Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	Sansaw Estate, Shrewsbury, UK	X3 months	1
		TOTAL	13

Erasmus Outbound Students – One Week Intensive Programmes- Academic Year 23/24

DkIT Department	Destination	Mobility Project	No. Students
Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	University of Lodz, Poland	Theme: Towards 15 minute Eco City	9
Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	Lodz Polytechnic, Poland	Theme: Gaming for assisted wellbeing technologies	7
Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	IUT Lens, France	Theme: eCOAL web development project	6
Dept. Creative Arts	University of Zaragoza, Spain	Theme: Digital Media applied to the Built Environment	10
Dept. Business Studies	IUT Lens, France	Theme: Marketing applications for the Tourism sector	6
Dept. Business Studies	IUT Lens, France	Theme: International Business Simulation Project	7
		TOTAL	45

TOTAL OUTBOUND ERASMUS STUDENTS 2023/2024: 76

(comprises STUDY ABROAD + PLACEMENT ABROAD + ONE-WEEK INTENSIVE programmes)

TOTAL OUTBOUND DkIT STAFF ON ERASMUS 2023/2024: 11

DkIT Department	Destination	Duration	No. Staff
Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	University of Lodz, Poland	X1 week	2 (Teaching)
Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	Lodz Polytechnic, Poland	X1 week	1 (Teaching)

Dept. Visual and Human-Centred Computing	IUT Lens	X1 week	1 (Teaching)
Dept. Business Studies	IUT Lens	X1 week	2 (Teaching)
Dept. Creative Arts	University of Zaragoza	X1 week	1 (Teaching)
Dept. Creative Arts	University of Babes-Bolyai, Romania	X1 week	2 (Teaching)
Dept. Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	University of Manresa, Spain	X1 week	1 (Training)
Dept. Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	Bielefeld UAS, Germany	X1 week	1 (Training)
		TOTAL	11

7. Library News

This year was another busy and successful reporting period. Staff continued to perform at a high level both within the library and online, providing a service to all of our library users. It was a successful year for the De Chastelain Library where we expanded our services and the content available to our students and staff. In keeping with the Institute's strategic plan to support research, teaching and learning, the Library continued to provide information skills training sessions in consultation with the relevant academic departments.

The library received significant funding from the Institute's Devolved Grant, NTUTOR, the HEA Space Survey to improve our physical rooms and spaces, allowing us to better serve the needs of all students and staff.

The success and footfall in the library has meant that the maintenance demands have increased and towards the end of the reporting period, we secured funding from the HEA Space Survey to install electronic access gates into the library, which will provide us with accurate information of usage of the library and providing a safe and secure area for all to study.

During the year, the library continued building collections both online and in print to enhance research and teaching at the Institute.

Selected Highlights

- The library received funding from NTUTOR to transform one of our learning spaces in the Slieve Foy room into an Active Learning Digital Collaboration Lab, supporting team, active learning and remote guest speaker/hybrid delivery. In addition, the Avoca room in the library now houses an eLearning pod, and is soon will be the home for a 'smart lightboard' which will support people wishing to develop and record engaging content in a new way.
- Further funding from the Institute's Devolved Grant allowed us to replace the computers in our Training Room.
- Provided information skills training and research support sessions in consultation with the relevant academic departments to support research, teaching and learning (online & in-person) with 189 classes booked and over 1500 students attending.
- The library hosted the Czech Ambassador to Ireland, Mr Pavel Vosalik and a delegation from the Czech embassy during his visit to the Institute.
- Expanded our Wellness area within the library for students to take a break from studies by reviving the library garden and create an outdoor area within the library.
- Joined DkIT Mental Health Working Group to host the Jed Foundation meeting (between Jed foundation and relevant DkIT staff members) with the aim of implementing ways of improving students' mental health within the institute and curriculum.
- Hosted a range of events in the library to collaborate with other DKIT services and departments including celebrating Seachtain na Gaeilge, Mental Health Week and Women's Aid to promote inclusion among all staff and students and hosting cultural events.
- The library hosted the Czech Ambassador to Ireland, Mr Pavel Vosalik and a delegation from the Czech embassy during his visit to the Institute.
- Library staff published in An Leabharlann journal published by the Library Association of Ireland.



Research And Information Skills (RIS)

The library maintained and enhanced the ever-popular Research & Information Skills classes offered to students this academic year. 2023-24 saw an increase in the number of classes delivered with 189 classes booked by academic staff and over 2500 students attending. Classes offered include:

- Tours
- Formal classes
- First Steps in Research
- Next Steps in Research
- Developing Your Research Skills
- Harvard Referencing and Plagiarism
- Mendeley Reference Manager
- Drop-ins
- One to One Classes
- Bespoke or Customized Classes

The library continued to host information on the Library Hub (via Moodle) as an alternative route to library guides and study aids.

As part of our Research support service, we deliver an introductory generic workshop to all new researchers, to ensure they are aware of Library services and resources. In addition, individual researchers have the opportunity to book discipline specific customised consultations with Library staff. We provide DkIT researchers with advice on Open Access publishing and support the Green Open Access model through our management of the STÓR Institutional Research Repository. Transformative Agreements with major publishers to enable researchers to use Open Access Publishing routes for their research were administered and promoted by library staff to our researchers. The Subject Liaison Team offered a high level of support for researchers across the Research Centres. A range of further skills were introduced by library staff such as:

- PhD by Publication
- Scoping Review Protocols
- Concept Analysis

Outreach

We maintained our '1 Card, 6 Libraries' Agreement with Louth County Library which is a unique service in Ireland, allowing county library members access to our collections and services and access for our DkIT community to have reciprocal access to the buildings (24-hour access) and collections of the

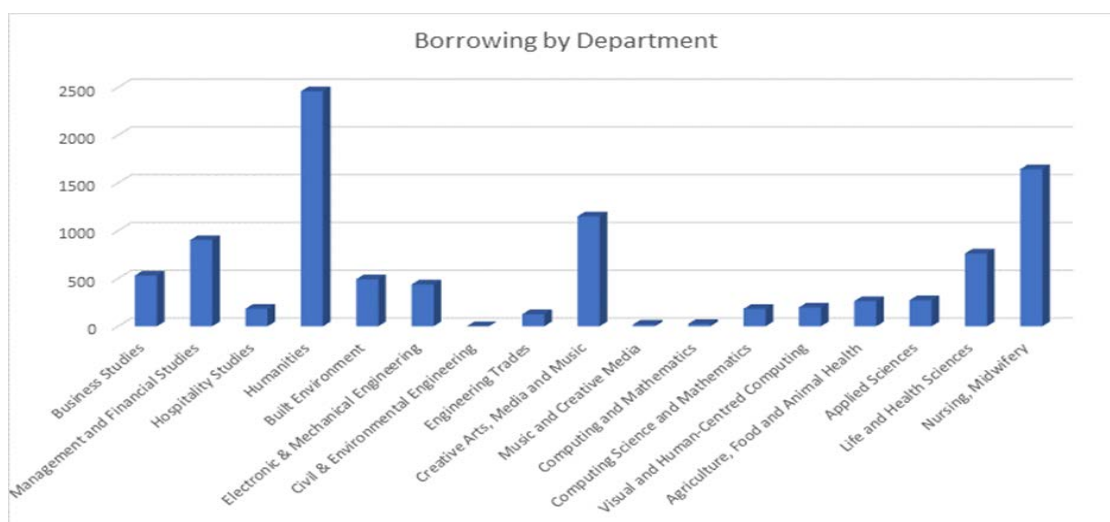
county libraries of Louth to aid their studies. We continued our outreach activities with Further Education and Training Institutes such as Cavan and Monaghan Institutes, by visiting and developing guides specific to the needs of their students.

Reader Services

The Reader Services team ensure that every visit to the reading rooms or reference inquiry happens smoothly and satisfactorily. It is the major interface between the library and its users and the first point of call for every user. The circulation staff play a major role in readers' services because they easily know the needs of the users and what the library has to offer and the staff address very quick directional and referral assistance to all.

There were 165,204 visits to the library with 21,489 physical items borrowed. Our online Library Chat enquiry service had 642 enquiries to the desk and 90% received a prompt reply within one hour or less.

During the academic year, the library experienced diverse borrowing patterns across its collection. Leading the way, Humanities recorded the highest borrowing with 2,458 loans borrowed, representing 25.49% of the total. Nursing & Midwifery followed closely with 1,643 loans at 17.04%, while Creative Arts, Media, and Music saw 1,150 loans borrowed, making up 11.92%. The Management and Financial Studies category accounted for 902 loans or 9.35%, and Business Studies borrowed 531 loans, equivalent to 5.51%.



Community

Our library is a hub that connect people, fosters dialogue, and enriches our community. Our commitment extends beyond DkIT to embrace the broader public. We recognise that a thriving community contributes to the growth of our institution. An example of community engagement is our linkage with O'Fiaich College. As part of our strategic alliance with the North East Further & Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA), we offer free library membership to Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) students at O'Fiaich College.

Collections and Resources

The total material spend per full time equivalent (FTE) for the academic year 2023-2024 was €45.19 a decrease of 6.99% on the previous academic year.

Books

The total number of titles ordered was 223. The book spend per FTE was €5.42. Book purchases accounted for 10.97% of the total spend on materials. The average price of a book was €97.01. Patron demand driven acquisitions e-book collections are hosted in JSTOR and ProQuest E-book Central platforms. The EBSCO Academic E-book Collection provides users with access to a large multidisciplinary e-book collection via EBSCOhost. All library e-book collections are available in MultiSearch.

Journals

The periodical spend per FTE was €0.15. Periodical subscriptions accounted for 0.31% of the total spend on materials. The library cancelled 2 periodical subscriptions this year: Architects Journal and Woodworker.

Databases

The spend per FTE was €39.62. Database subscriptions accounted for 80.25% of the total spend on materials. The library gained access to 2 new databases this year funded by NTUTORR: Project Muse and Springer Nature Link with Springer 2024 Computer Science e-book collection.

Library Management System and Technologies

A tender working group was set up from Librarians within the THEA sector to review submissions for the replacement of our Library Management System. This will conclude in 2026. As well as the Library Management system, the library maintains online resources such as:

- Libguides
- Webpages
- Library Hub (Moodle VLE)
- Social Media: e.g., 550 followers on Library Instagram, 1,040 followers on library twitter (X) accounts.
- Discovery service (EDS)
- Self-service options – Self-service Kiosk and Library App

The roll out of the multi-factor authentication (MFA) security system by Computer Services (CS) across the Institute created some challenges for the library. Specifically, the Library App (SOLUS) did not work on Apple devices (iPhones and iPads) using MFA for a number of months (October to December). Also, our self-service machine was affected by MFA for a number of weeks.

Cultural events and activities

We continued our outreach activities to open up the Institute Library to the wider regional DKIT community by hosting community groups such as Comhrá na Gaeilge, Local History, Book & Film Club, local social groups and hosting valued Institute partners such as the Czech Ambassador.

Physical Library Spaces

The Library holds 473 desks in addition to dedicated study rooms for collaborative study and a separate quiet zone in the library with full Wi-Fi.

The library consists of 2 floors of physical space for individual study (473), three group work rooms and shared spaces. The three group work rooms are available to pre-book and 30 hard-wired PCs (spread over the two floors) are also available to pre-book for students.

Library staff worked to revive and bring new life to the library garden which had grown into disuse during the Covid pandemic shutdowns.

The Slieve Foye room has been upgraded to become an '*Active Learning Digital Collaboration Lab*', supporting team and active learning and remote guest speaker/hybrid delivery if needed. It houses 24 networked laptops, as well as wi-fi and desks to support those using their own devices. In addition, the Avoca room in the library now houses an eLearning pod which will support people wishing to develop and record engaging content in a new way. Both rooms are available for all staff within the Institute.

Further funding from the Institute's Devolved Grant allowed us to replace the computers in our Training Room.

Access control – Speed lanes for exit and entrance

New Speed Lanes (Access controlled gates) were purchased through the HEA Space Survey funding to replace the old gates that were out of warranty and not working.

KCC group were selected to provide and install the new lanes. The SALTO access control company were also selected to provide the technology (software) that controls access to users.

8. Student Services



It is the mission of Student Services, to offer the highest quality student experience and support for all DkIT students and to ensure effective communication and planned actions between the various student services supports.

Student Services, which are managed by the Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (AASAM), and operate under the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (Registrar's Office), are a team of professional service providers who provide support for students to actively engage in their third level experience. The services are provided to full-time and part-time undergraduate, postgraduate, Springboard and apprentice students. The Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager meets representatives of the services on a regular basis to ensure efficient and effective delivery of supports to students. The Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager is also a member of the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC) and Academic Council (AC). All activities in the area are driven by strategic objectives aligned with the Institute Strategic Plan (2024-2028).

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in Student Services for the reporting period 2023-2024.

8.1 HEA, Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH)

The Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) is a dedicated fund, broken into five strands, committed to increasing participation by under-represented groups in higher education. The programme supports the delivery of the National Action Plan Objectives. The following is an update on projects which have been developed over the reporting period in DkIT, under strands 2-5, to support the priorities of the National Access Plan.

PATH 2 – 1916 Bursary

In 2023/24 the application process moved to a centralised national process and the Access Service promoted the scheme and provided information to 1st year students pre and post entry. This scheme will be administered by SUSI, the national awarding authority for Further and Higher Education Grants, for the next academic year.

PATH 3 – Higher Education Access Fund

DkIT has a particular focus on working to support the recommendations made in the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan which is a development from the Geiran report. The Access Service worked on building relationships with community groups and organisations (particularly Youthreach) that deliver diversion activities and after-school supports to young people who are at risk of dropping out of formal education as well as working with those who have already dropped out of school but who are being encouraged to return to formal education or related. We supported 'New Choices' in Drogheda and 'NYPD Youth Diversion Project' in Navan working with young people at risk of early-school leaving and involvement in criminality.

REACH (Raising Educational Aspirations for Communities in Higher Education)

Further discussion between DkIT staff and the community organisations working in the area of diversion highlighted the need for further networking and training opportunities given the scale of the challenges faced in working with young people most at risk. These discussions culminated in the REACH (Raising Educational Aspirations for Communities in Higher Education) seminar on 6th February 2024 – funded by PATH 3 College Connect. There were over a hundred attendees at this event (including our partners in Drogheda and Navan). The focus of the event was how to empower community organisations to increase access rates from young people in their community. A particular focus was conducting this work in an environment in which child trafficking is rife (specifically 'recruitment' of young people into the illegal drugs trade).

DkIT is committed to being responsive to the needs identified rather than being prescriptive in terms of what is required and to providing further opportunities to these community groups to meet, to develop strategies and to collaborate.

PATH 4 Phase 1 - Universal Design Fund

Supporting inclusive universally designed higher education environments for all: The Disability Officer led out on 2 projects under this PATH Strand to provide Campus Accessibility Improvements that will demonstrate best practice in UD and support autism-friendly campuses. The third project under this strand, to provide Technology-based solutions that support inclusive practices in teaching and learning, was led by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT). All of these projects will contribute to enhancing an inclusive environment and to the digital accessibility aspect of inclusive practices:

Enhancing accessibility on campus

In July 2022 DkIT commissioned an accessibility audit, conducted by a consultant architect with expertise in universal design. The output of the audit will aid in the formulation of an action plan to support improved accessibility. In 2023 funding from this project has been used to support the implementation of priority actions from the plan.

Towards an Autism-friendly campus at DkIT

AsIAM conducted a campus sensory audit in September 2022. The outcome of this audit, together with evidence and best practice, has been used to develop an action plan. Funding has been used to support the development and commence implementation of this action plan.

Enhancing digital accessibility at DkIT

This project supported the implementation of an accessibility toolkit for the VLE. This toolkit was used to conduct an accessibility audit of the VLE and to develop an action plan. The project focused on building capacity among staff and students through awareness raising, training, guidance, and support.

PATH 4 Phase 2

To improve opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to engage in higher education: The Careers & Employability Centre, Disability Service and Sports and Societies were part of the steering committee alongside other student services colleagues and the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years, that secured funding following a competitive call for proposals to enhance the existing DkIT Certificate in Skills for Independent Living programme.

This project will facilitate the Career Preparation and Work Placement optional modules for the 2024 student intake. This will provide employability skills and workplace opportunities for students thus enhancing their potential to enter the workforce. A dedicated Placement Officer managed through the Careers & Employability Centre will lead out on the employability element of this programme and work with the Centre on supporting placement students registered with the Disability Office in planning, securing and completing their work placement modules.

The recruitment of a Support and Integration officer shall further enhance the integration of the students into the DkIT college community and shall provide them with the additional support required to maximise their student experience in DkIT. The Support and Integration Office will develop and implement programs aimed at fostering social integration and inclusion for students registered on the Independent Living programme and those registered with the Disability Service. This enhanced programme shall be evaluated throughout its lifecycle to optimise the delivery and student experience for future student cohorts.

Path 5 – Funding to support Traveller and Roma Students in Higher Education

The Access Office focused in particular on a cohort of Navan-based second level students from the Traveller community. These students availed of structured visits to the DkIT campus and related field trips. A dedicated Traveller and Roma outreach worker has been recruited for the next academic year.

8.2 Autism Friendly Institute

DkIT was accredited as an Autism Friendly HEI Candidate at the start of the academic year. As part of that accreditation the Autism Friendly HEI Working Group developed an Action Plan which was presented by the DkIT Disability Officer to ASIAM's Accreditation Panel in June 2024. The Action Plan was accepted and the Institute accredited as an Autism Friendly HEI. The Institute will continue to implement the actions outlined in the plan over the next three years.



8.3 National Frameworks

8.3.1 National Framework for Consent in Higher Education - RESPECT Campaign

The DkIT frameworks manager worked closely with the Marketing team to develop the RESPECT Campaign (Responding to and Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment, Promoting Positive sexual Experiences and Changing Campus culture Together). The campaign was launched in March 2024 to coincide with RAG Week. A new dedicated RESPECT Webpage, with information on key messages, training, internal and external supports and pathways to reporting, was developed. Promotional videos were created with students and key members of staff to engage students. A range of resources including badges, lanyards and phone pop sockets have been used both to promote the campaign and as an incentive for staff and students to engage in training.

The following awareness raising and training sessions were provided during the reporting period:

- Induction for first year students outlining the implementation of the Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment Framework in DkIT (RESPECT Campaign) and the key messages of 'Consent'. This included an introduction to online training resources that are available to all students and the 'Speakout' Anonymous Reporting Tool.
- Training for Sports and Societies officers and Student Ambassadors including a presentation on ESVH and the RESPECT Campaign in DkIT.
- Presentation for new staff members on the ESVH Framework; Training Commitment by DkIT on ESVH, Online Trainings Available, Speakout Anonymous Reporting Tool, and pathways to reporting incidents.
- Interactive Information Stands at key events including the Health Fair, S.H.A.G week, Sports and Societies Sign up day and RAG Week

- 'Active Consent' workshops were facilitated for 1st Years in October 2023 (30 students).
- 'Disclosure Training' facilitated by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre was delivered in Semesters 1 and 2 (20 staff).
- Information on 'Active Consent', 'Bystander Training', 'Speakout' and 'IADT Moving Parts' Videos were made available for students on Moodle in the Counselling Hub.

8.3.2 National Framework for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

This year, the Institute Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework action plan was revised and re-structured to support a more effective implementation process. Four key areas (Live, Learn, Support and Improve) now encompass the key recommended actions from the HEA framework and the working group membership has been expanded in line with this to ensure key elements from the Institute are represented. The Institute appointed a Mental Health Nurse Advisor in January 2024 on a two-year fixed term contract, funded by the HEA Mental Health Funding, to provide a comprehensive suite of mental health and wellbeing supports within DkIT Student Services.

One of the key actions under the SMH Framework this year has been the partnership with The Jed Foundation, a US based charitable organisation that provides colleges and universities with expert support, evidence-based best practices, and data-driven guidance to promote and support student mental health and work towards reducing rates of suicide within the student population. This is a 2 - year process, where we will work with JED, with an Institute Wide Approach on creating a culture of care where all students feel seen and supported

8.3.3. Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Programme – guided by the HSE MECC Framework

The Institute Health Unit is participating in the HSE MECC Programme by helping students who visit the service make changes to lower their risk of chronic disease. This approach encourages students to make healthy lifestyle choices during this critical period of their lives, with the goal of preventing chronic disease.

8.4 DkIT Elevate Award

The Elevate Framework and Award, in its fifth consecutive year, is the result of a partnership between the Students' Union, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching and Student Services, and is led by the Careers and Employability Centre.

This event has become a highlight in the Dundalk Institute of Technology calendar. On June 17th, 22 students across disciplines and stages received this unique award for 2024, this was the largest number since the initiative began, and an increase of 9 students on previous year. Stronger connections with the Sports & Societies Office in particular has contributed to this increase. The ambition is to grow these numbers by reviewing the process alongside the key stakeholders and adapt the process to increase the level of student awareness and engagement with the award. The Award is part of DkIT's commitment to support greater student engagement and partnership within DkIT, but also to empower students to recognise and evidence the employability skills they develop through active engagement. The Elevate Awards are made to students who, through their

engagement with DkIT life (a minimum of 45 hours) have contributed significantly to the DkIT community and who have evidenced a range of impressive employability skills through their engagement. Alongside their voluntary work, students must complete a CV, LinkedIn, Graduate Attribute reflection and a recorded Elevator Pitch to meet the award criteria.

8.5 Student Service Activities and Developments

The following are the key highlights for each of the services for the reporting period.

8.5.1 Access Service

The access service works to increase access to third level from under-represented groups identified as key target groups by the National Access Office of the HEA. The access service also works to increase the participation of these students in third level with a view to successful completion of their programme of studies.

In academic year 2023/24, work began on the PATH 5 project. This involved eight field trips / workshops offered to second level students engaged with Meath Travellers Workshop (MTW):

- Apprenticeship Section DkIT
- LMETB Regional Skills Training Centre
- Cookery School, Irish National Stud
- Veterinary Nursing DkIT
- Aiken Barracks (Defence Forces)
- Humanities DkIT
- Battle of the Boyne site

Following discussion with students and staff in MTW, further development of this project will, in 2024/25 academic year, likely prioritise additional tuition supports. Students are more motivated and aware of the benefits of third level study as a result of the year's activities. The Access Service engaged with those working with people engaged in diversion projects / activities. Visits to campus were arranged for two groups of young people engaged in these projects. Following meetings with staff on these projects, PATH 3 funding was provided to the projects in order to purchase learning equipment and learning resources. This is work that was highlighted as a future priority for DkIT as part of our College Connect PATH 3 work. Allied to this, the Access Officer and staff from other HEIs participated in a structured visit to Mountjoy Prison (June 2024). The visit included meetings with prison staff, prisoners and CDETB staff with a view providing education to prisoners above FET level 5. Please see below for details on the REACH seminar held on 6th February. Venues / events / talks delivered in 2023/24 include: Dunboyne FET College; DIFE – talks and Careers Fair; Colaiste Dhulaigh Careers Fair; Louth Meath Migrant Forum; LMETB Careers Fair; Apprentices Expo; Higher Options; Jobs & Education Fair Navan (Meath Partnership) and Monaghan Institute.

The Access Service launched the Bernard Duffy Scholarship scheme in 2023/24 academic year. This scholarship targets HEAR eligible students entering DkIT having completed the Leaving Certificate in a non-fee paying second level students in Dundalk town. Exceptionally in this inaugural year, three rather than two scholarships were awarded as two of the top three points scoring students were “tied” on Leaving Certificate points.

The Access Officer has met with TUSLA staff in Counties Louth and Meath with a view to increasing awareness of supports (financial and otherwise) for students in this geographical area who are in the care system.

The Access Service promoted the HEAR entry route at a series of external events during the academic year (including LMETB Careers Fair, Coláiste Dhúlaigh Careers Fair, Louth Meath Migrant Forum event, Meath Partnership Jobs and Education Fair, Higher Options, Dunboyne FET College Careers Fair, DIFE Careers Fair, etc.).

One student continued to be supported under the DkIT Sanctuary Scholarships Programme. While there were many queries throughout the year, most prospective applicants were not eligible to apply and of the minority who were eligible, they did not receive an offer of a place at DkIT. It is noted that prospective Sanctuary Scholarship applicants apply, in the main, for very high-demand programmes (nursing programmes).

Two students are being supported with this Scholarship (funded by The Probation Service). DkIT will have two more scholarships available for the next academic year.

DkIT used PATH 3 College Connect funding to support projects (New Choices in Drogheda and NYPD Youth Diversion project in Navan) working with young people at risk of early-school leaving and involvement in criminality. We began engagement by delivering a mentoring workshop in a community premises in Drogheda to community workers in the region – with a specific focus on working with young people at risk. DkIT alumni were now working in many of these organisations and a degree of follow-up networking took place. (This culminated in the REACH event on 6th February 2024. Further meetings saw the Community Connector meet with staff on the New Choices project in Drogheda. Young people engaged with these projects were facilitated with structured visits to the DkIT campus in academic year 23/24. Many of the young people engaged in the Navan diversion project are from the Traveller community. While the PATH 5 partnership with Meath Travellers Workshop allowed DkIT to focus on those still in second level education, we worked to develop ways to reach those who have already left formal education and identified Youthreach in particular as a valuable partner.

DkIT engaged in a series of meetings with newly designated DEIS school in Dundalk – St Louis Secondary School and Coláiste Chú Chulainn. Following discussion between DkIT and St Louis Secondary School about possible ways in which to best support their students, it was agreed that a sensory pod would be a very practical way in which to support two categories of students (not mutually exclusive) most in need of support were those who were neuro-diverse and also those experiencing heightened anxieties around engagement on the physical campus in the post-lockdown environment. Seven schools were supported with a fully-funded online tuition service (Studydix). Two of the schools received this support for 5th and 6th year students (St Louis Secondary School and Coláiste Chú Chulainn) – this is in line with our particular focus on newly-designated DEIS schools. The remaining

five schools received this support for their 6th year students. This support is greatly valued by the students and staff of these schools – as all students in the year have access to the resource, lesson plans and homework activities can be planned around the use of this online service.

DkIT focused in particular on a cohort of Navan-based second level students from the Traveller community. In academic year 23/24, these students availed of structured visits to the DkIT campus and related field trips. In addition to working with our second level school partners, we believe that there is a need to reach out to the parents of these students and this will form part of our outreach learnings from 23/24 to input into activities in the 24/25 academic year.

DkIT has supported our community partner MTW to deliver cultural awareness training to schools and Youthreach centres as part of the underpinning of the work we carried out in 23/24 academic year to increase Traveller access rates to third level (which starts with being supported to continue with study at second level). This reflects the need to foster an environment that is conducive to the aims of PATH 5. In tandem with this, on campus diversity initiatives have celebrated Traveller culture. One day (18th October 2023) of Diversity Week was specifically dedicated to the experience of the Traveller community via a vis education and an open forum discussion took place following talks from a panel made up of members of the Traveller community.

DkIT used part of its PATH 5 funding to fund the Whidden Workshops delivered through the PATH 3 College Connect project. Whidden Workshops – its Kusti to Rokker (WWKR) are a series of virtual, peer-led workshops where current Traveller & Roma students come together to inspire, inform & increase Traveller & Roma participation in higher education. The workshops provide prospective Traveller & Roma students with information, guidance, and insight into the real experiences of Traveller & Roma students accessing and currently progressing through third level education. DkIT students were active in these workshops during academic year 23/24 and it was also arranged by the DkIT Access Service for Traveller students from St. Louis Secondary School to join the (online) workshops during class-time (and with their teacher present).

8.5.2 Disability Service



Disability Service

Seirbhís Míchumas

The Disability Service provides support to students with a verified disability, significant ongoing illness or mental health condition who disclose to the service and request support

DkIT is committed to providing an equitable learning environment for all its students (including those with a disability). The Disability Service (DS) provides a wide range of supports and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Since 2018 DkIT has been supporting students who apply through the DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) scheme thus enabling those students who meet the criteria to avail of reduced points places on courses in DkIT. The DS works tirelessly to

support students with physical, sensory, learning or mental health disabilities through a variety of supports offered, these include but are not limited to:

- Advocacy
- Note Takers (Human and Electronic)
- Personal Assistants
- One to one Learning Support Tutors
- Extended Library Loans
- Access to Sensory Room
- Access to Assistive Technology (AT) equipment, training and room.
- Reasonable Accommodations (RA) in Examinations

The following are some of the key highlights for the service this year:

- Accreditation as an Autism Friendly HEI
- The appointment of a Mental Health Nurse within Student Services is welcomed and provides another level of support for students. This post will be used to assist with assessment of student need for the next academic year, for students who disclose a Mental Health condition.
- The ongoing availability of an Assistive Technology Officer provides training to support students with regard to literacy difficulties and AT queries.
- The DS now provides information to new Invigilators and Scribes during their training. These sessions help invigilators and scribes understand the specific guidelines and regulations for supporting students with disabilities during exams, helping to maintain fairness and compliance. It also ensures that reasonable accommodations are implemented correctly, issues are addressed proactively and the process of invigilation runs smoothly and instils confidence in students and invigilators.
- The MSForm students use request supports in RA in Exams in In-Class tests has been updated to include a question to encourage students to engage with their lecturer before requesting supports, this update is as a result in the over/miss-use of the form and the fact that some students' lecturers can accommodate the RA in in-class tests at a local level and not all in-class tests require reasonable accommodations such as MCQ tests for example, without input from the DS and Exams to provide the support.
- Ongoing updates and maintenance of website, Autism&Uni website and the student Moodle support hub. A specific Staff section has been created on the Moodle hub which includes information about supporting many disabilities and RA in Exams and Marking guidelines.

Types of Disability Supported (UG and PG) – Primary Disability	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
ADD/ADHD	19	25	19	12	6
Autism Spectrum Disorder (Including Asperger's Syndrome)	47	27	32	23	24
Blind/Visual Imp	4	3	4	3	3
Deaf/Hearing	5	5	4	4	4
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) Dyspraxia	33	29	31	33	26
Mental Health Condition	34	24	22	28	24
Neurological Condition including Speech and Language Dif.	22	24	22	20	14
Physical Disability	12	12	14	13	16
Significant On-going Illness	24	20	25	31	33
Specific Learning Difficulty	116	129	120	107	111
Other incl. General / Mild / Borderline Learning Difficulty	5	4	7		
Totals	321	302	300	274	261

For 2023-24 113 students had two or more confirmed disabilities/conditions.

8.5.3 Pastoral Care



Pastoral Care

Cúram Tréadach

Pastoral Care is about welcome and working collaboratively in the provision of holistic care within the College community.

The pastoral care service continues to grow and develop. It is constantly adjusting to the need of staff and students. The following are some of the highlights for the Service:

- During Mental Health week a Gi-Qong class was organised with a certified Instructor. This is an active form of meditation which was very well attended. Also, a hike in the Cooley Mountains was organised during this week. This gave students an opportunity to spend time in nature, connecting with others looking after their wellbeing.
- Once again, we ran a Speechcraft 5-week workshop which offers students an opportunity to practice public speaking, improve their communication and confidence with an experienced instructor. This was very well attended once again and certificates of attendance were handed out to all those who completed the course.

- In November an Introduction to Yoga and Cocoa was offered to staff and students. This was an opportunity to take time out from a busy schedule to relax and unwind. These unique classes give staff and students and opportunity to try new things to promote their wellbeing.
- Breathwork classes were established in November, Breathwork is a form of active meditation. Classes were offered twice a week at lunchtime. Both students and staff were able to avail of these classes which were well attended and very positive feedback especially to students who were feeling overwhelmed.
- At Christmas we organised a massive raffle to win an E-Scooter which was kindly donated by a member of staff. This helped generate important funds for the Student Hardship Fund which supported keeping the food press stocked and supporting students who were experiencing financial difficulty.
- In February another trip to the Cooley Mountains was organised. These trips are important for encouraging students to spend time outdoors looking after the mental wellbeing and physical health. These trips are always a great success and a staple in the Pastoral Care calendar.
- This year a Positive Masculinity workshop was organised. This was a first for DkIT and this event was extremely well attended. It offered a safe and confidential space for men to open up and have conversations around their wellbeing and societal expectations and their impacts on men's mental health. It highlighted the need for more events like this.
- Pancake Tuesday was a big success this year. The set up and organisation was much better this year. There was a huge turn out from students again this year. Donations were made in support of the student hardship fund. It generated a good buzz on campus while also pulling staff together helping out to create a successful event.
- DkIT Student Connect was established once a week at lunchtime to aid bringing students together to chat and connect over tea/coffee and biscuits. This will need work in the following academic year to really establish a consistent and regular meet up every week and to raise awareness of events such as these.
- A Tribal Drumming Workshop was organised in March. The facilitator John Bowker educated staff and students on the power of rhythm and its importance in our culture. It was beginner friendly and participants learned a little about each other as well as learning some drumming rhythms. This was a powerful event for all those that attended and the feedback has been great.
- A Historical Walking Tour of Dublin was arranged in April with a professional and experienced Tour Guide. We took a large group from Dublin to the City Centre and there we met our guide. The students were fully engaged as the brilliant powerhouse of knowledge and storytelling guide entertained for over two hours with detailed and amazing stories of Irelands history.

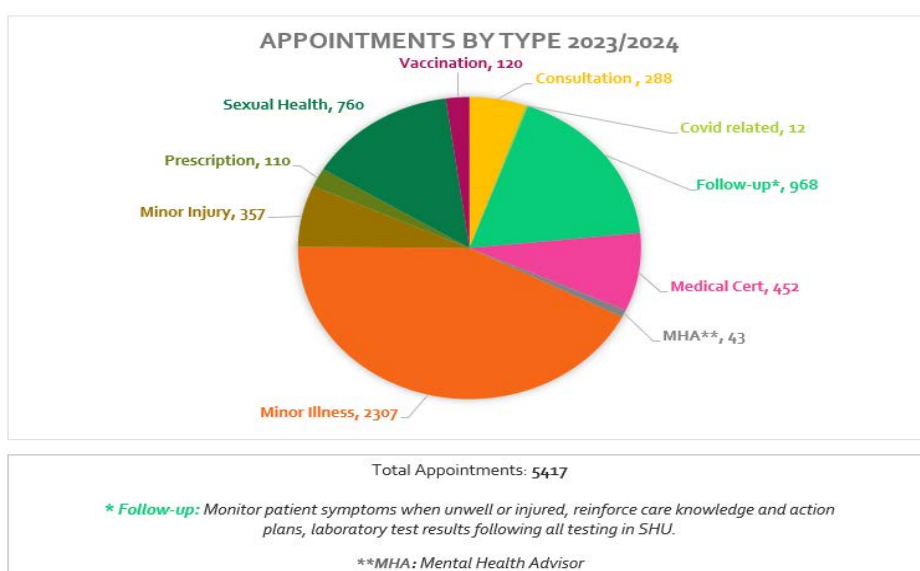
8.5.4 Student Health Unit



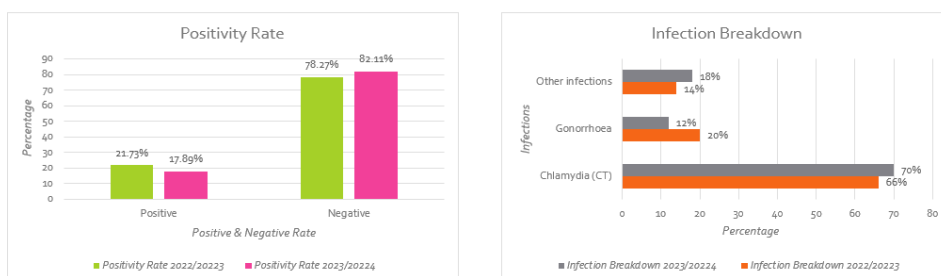
Health Unit Seirbhísí Sláinte

Student Health Unit provides a general medical, psychological and health educational service to all students in a confidential, professional & courteous manner. The centre includes free nursing care and access to a doctor at scheduled times throughout the week.

The Student Health Unit (SHU) team continue to improve the quality of the service provision to actively promote and support wellbeing and positive mental health. This is an on-going challenge with the continuous increase in the numbers of students seeking this support and the complexity of the issues presenting to the SHU.



Sexual Health Statistics



• In the **2022/2023** academic year, we observed an increase in the number of sexual health screenings among our students. Females accounted for 63% of the total screenings, while males made up the remaining 37%. The overall positivity rate was 21.73%. Chlamydia (CT) was the most common infection, representing 66% of the positive cases, followed by Gonorrhoea at 20%, and other infections (including HSV, M.Gen, Syphilis, and HPV) at 14%.

• In the **2023/2024** academic year, there was no change in the trend of increasing student usage of our sexual health services. We observed a 27.95% rise in the number of tests carried out. The positivity rate was 17.89%, similar to the previous year. Chlamydia remained the most common infection, accounting for 70% of positive cases, followed by Gonorrhoea at 12%, and other infections at 18%. Females continued to be more likely to use the service, with more than twice as many women getting tested compared to men.

The number of students attending the Student Health Unit (SHU) continues to rise, reflecting the increasing demand for our services. Among our various initiatives, we are particularly proud of our sexual health promotion and screening and the positive outcomes achieved:

The Health Unit kicked off the 2023-2024 semester by supporting the Student Union's Freshers' Week, as always. This event provides a valuable opportunity to raise awareness about the various student services available, especially for new students. Given the numerous social events during this week, we put significant effort into promoting healthy sexual behaviours, STI and unplanned pregnancy prevention, consent, and alcohol and drug awareness. To achieve this, we enhance our presence on social media platforms with informative posts and relevant links. Additionally, we update and expand our poster campaigns and visual displays around campus. We also set up pop-up stands across campus to offer advice and education, distribute free condoms and lubricants, and ensure that the condom dispensers are well-stocked.

On October 23, 2023, the Laura Brennan Catch Up HPV vaccination program returned to campus. This marked the third visit we organised for the HSE to provide this invaluable service to our students. Both male and female students, regardless of nationality or possession of a PPS number, could receive the vaccination if they had missed their school vaccination. The vaccinations were provided free of charge, and the campaign concluded in December 2023. Now, students seeking the same vaccines at third level might face costs up to €600. Each clinic saw an increase in uptake compared to previous numbers. These clinics are no easy task and involve extensive organising, communicating, planning, and advertising between the Health Unit and the HSE. This is all done while still striving to run an efficient service and care for sick students.

We successfully delivered two very busy Flu Vaccine Clinics in the Health Unit on November 23, 2023, and December 7, 2023. We saw a significant number of both staff and student participants. The Health Unit was delighted to host its second in-person, on-campus Health Fair since the COVID-19 pandemic, which had necessitated a hiatus of several years. The event spanned three days and took place at various locations across the campus, showcasing a diverse array of companies and projects dedicated to promoting good health within our community. Dr Sean Owens, a valued member of the Clermont Health team, working with the SHU, attended our Health fair this year to speak on "Healthy eating & lifestyle". Sean has a special interest in sustainable diets, lifestyle medicine and planetary health and he is the current chair of the Irish Climate and Health Alliance, which represents Ireland's leading healthcare institutions position on the potential co-benefits for Health with effective climate action. As always, this successful collaboration between other student services colleagues particularly the sports and societies, counselling team, pastoral care coordinator, the student union team, personnel from the school of nursing, the Hospitality department along with other external agencies. Each day's highlights:

Day 1: General Wellness and Mental Health

- **Exhibitors and Activities:** A variety of exhibitors offered advice on wellness, sexual health, healthy eating, addiction support, mental well-being, metabolic testing, and body composition analysis.
- **Visual Display:** The “Share the Load” exhibit featured an eye-catching display of backpacks, symbolizing the average number of college-aged individuals who die by suicide annually in Ireland.

Day 2: Healthy Heart Focus

- **CPR Training:** Our on-campus nurse trainers facilitated CPR training sessions, emphasizing the importance of immediate response in cardiac emergencies.
- **Health Checks:** The Irish Health Foundation's mobile unit provided on-board health checks and distributed heart health information.
- **Healthy Eating:** The campus canteen featured a "Healthy Heart" menu, promoting heart-friendly food choices.
- **Expert Talk:** Dr. Sean Owens delivered an engaging talk on “Healthy Eating & Lifestyle,” sharing insights on maintaining heart health through diet and lifestyle.

Day 3: Road Safety and Nutrition

- **Road Safety:** The day was centred around road safety, highlighted by the launch of “The Lifesaver Project” by An Garda Síochána, marking its first introduction in County Louth.
- **Interactive Learning:** The Road Safety Authority (RSA) engaged attendees with interactive VR goggles to simulate safe driving experiences.
- **Nutrition Talk:** Sharon Courtney, a sports and exercise nutritionist, gave an informative talk on nutrition, tailored for active lifestyles.

Throughout the three days, the event also featured:

- **Breathwork Classes:** Daily breathwork sessions with Alan, promoting relaxation and stress management.
- **Vaccine Clinics:** COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics were available for attendees.
- **Fitness Opportunities:** Sign-ups for exercise classes and hikes were offered, encouraging participants to stay active and engaged.

This year’s Health Fair not only marked a successful return to in-person engagement but also reinforced our commitment to fostering a healthy and supportive campus environment.

In association with S.H.A.G (Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance) week, we organised an HIV and STI awareness mini-event on February 14th and invited HIV Ireland to join us. They brought their new

team and van to launch their initiative "Equal Check and Chat," which aims to visit remote communities around Ireland, creating HIV awareness and offering rapid HIV testing and other services. We set up information tables outside the main canteen with posters, leaflets, and materials promoting healthy sexual behaviours, STI and HIV awareness, contraception, and unplanned pregnancy advice. Additionally, we had a table displaying various contraceptive devices available to students, providing education on their use and how to access them. To encourage engagement, we ran a sexual health quiz and offered free food and merchandise. The Equal Check and Chat team set up on Civic Square, educating, promoting, and offering HIV tests. They were impressed by the students' response and their existing knowledge. We were honoured to have HIV and Irish Trans Activist Rebecca de Havilland join us for the event.

DKIT was one of the first HEI's in Ireland to facilitate three MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccination clinics in March 2024 on campus. This was in association with the HSE due to the rise in measles cases across the UK and mainland Europe. The MMR vaccine uptake in Ireland is currently below the WHO recommended target uptake of 95%. Nationally, uptake has been below 90% for seven consecutive quarters. There are also significant geographic variations with uptake *rates below 80% in Louth and Meath*, but as high as 94% in Dublin Southwest. A recent Irish study has also estimated that more than a tenth of adults aged 18-34 are non-immune to measles. It is nearly 20% for males aged 18-19 years. The likely reason for this high level of non-immunity relates to misinformation in the past about the vaccine which falsely implicated it with a risk of autism. As autism is more often diagnosed in young male children it is likely that a cohort of now young men were not vaccinated due to parental decisions informed by this "erroneous science" which has since been discredited.

The Health Unit team meticulously monitored the situation, maintaining constant communication with public health teams due to the elevated case numbers in our area. We proactively prepared for the clinic ahead of the official date announcements, ensuring we were ready to facilitate these clinics at a moment's notice. The steps that were mentioned for organising the HPV clinics and Flu Vaccine clinics all needed to be put in place for these clinics also.

The appointment in January of a Mental Health Nurse Adviser to help support students experiencing mental health difficulties has been a great addition to the SHU team. This role extends beyond offering immediate support to a more holistic approach to student wellbeing and includes the following:

- Personalised care plans tailored to each student's unique needs and strengths, which helps determine the type of mental health support they require and identify any additional support they may need. This can sometimes involve other resources available through DKIT student services.
- Close collaboration with the staff in the student health unit, student counselling, and disability services, providing support and assistance to all other offices and academic departments within DKIT when a student needs help.
- Working with students to help them understand their mental wellbeing and provide education and sessions on managing anxiety, stress, low mood and other issues.
- Offering support and resources when they feel overwhelmed.

- Support with medication management and regular check-ins
- coordinates with external services such as GPs, community mental health teams, psychiatry liaison teams, and inpatient mental health settings to ensure comprehensive support for the students.

8.5.5 Student Counselling Service



Counselling Service Seirbhís Comhairleoireachta

The Counselling service is free and confidential for students. The service is operated by a team of psychologists and counsellors who are fully trained and accredited.

This section outlines some of the key achievements and initiatives within the Student Counselling Service during the year 2023 – 2024 along with some learning points and plans for next steps.

In the previous year's annual report, we reflected on some issues that we felt could be improved: We noted that there were high levels of missed and cancelled appointments at different times of the year and considered ways in which this could be addressed. Service feedback indicated room for improvement in relation to 'accessibility' with students asking for quicker access to appointments, and access to more appointments. Additionally, some students reported to struggle with the online registration process (i.e., completing forms when struggling with mood). We considered introducing drop - in sessions to allow students to have a short exploratory conversation with one of the counselling team to identify needs and to signpost to resources and supports in line with this. We felt that this would support students in decision making with regards to their need for therapy and their capacity to engage with it. It would allow us to ensure availability for urgent appointments and the spaces could also be offered to students who are having difficulty with the registration process. In September 2023 we introduced a drop - in service from 11 am until 1pm each day, shared on a rotational basis across the team. The 'duty counsellor' is also allocated responsibility for responding to issues of concern that may come in to the counsellor email throughout the day.

We also recognized the need for greater visibility of the service across campus. We updated our information leaflets, webpages and Moodle tiles to assist with this. This will include key information regarding the nature, purpose and scope of the service, as well as how to access appointments. Increased engagement with the service by international students had been observed as a trend in recent years. We identified a need for training to support our abilities to provide culturally sensitive care. To meet this need, this year, we organised training from (ICOS – Irish Council for International Students) for staff including ourselves and also attended further training on 'Cultural Humility'.

Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework

The counselling team continue to lead the student mental health working group. This year, the action plan was revised and re-structured to support a more effective implementation process. Four key areas (Live, Learn, Support and Improve) now encompass the key recommended actions from the HEA framework and the working group membership has been expanded in line with this to ensure key elements from the Institute are represented.

Live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We organised a <i>'Mental Health Awareness week'</i> to align with World Mental Health Day (10th October) in partnership with other teams from student services and the student union. This jam-packed weeklong event consisted of a myriad of workshops, mental health guest speakers, positive mental health tips, music and mindfulness, onsite supports and fun activities for both students and staff. We also celebrated the 20-year anniversary of Student Counselling within the Institute. • We led a 'task and finish' group to develop a <i>'Student Mental Health' Policy</i>. This has been completed and the policy will now be submitted for approval to the Policy Committee. • In semester 2, we organised a <i>'Pride Across the World'</i> – Living Library Event in partnership with 'Dundalk Outcomers'. A panel of speakers from different countries shared their experiences and challenges living as a member of the LGBTQ+ community to an audience of 70 students and staff.
Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created a dedicated tile on Moodle called 'Supporting Students as Staff' (SSAS). This holds information on the Counselling Service, schedule of training events, online training modules, information videos, general information on how to access our service and details for additional supports that are available on a 24/7 basis. • We organised and facilitated training sessions for staff and students to enhance awareness of mental health issues and build skills in responding effectively to students who are experiencing distress.
Support	<p>Togetherall</p> <p>We continue to offer students access to 'Togetherall', an online space where students can talk, share, support and be supported by peers, anonymously. It also provides the option to enroll on one of twenty-two structured self-help courses. It is suitable for students with mild to moderate mental health concerns and it has a large clinically trained team of mental health professionals who moderate the site 24/7, known as 'Wall Guides'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Togetherall' has been promoted through bespoke emails to all staff and all students, pull up banners located strategically across campus, a Togetherall Tile on Moodle, the provision of a PowerPoint to academic staff to share within lectures, the development of a promotional video and regular visibility on social media channels (e.g., Instagram accounts from Students Services; DkIT; Students Union), and the use of the Togetherall logo within e-mail signatures and 'out of office' replies. • A total of 100 DkIT students registered with Togetherall this year, bringing the total number of students who have registered with the platform since it was launched in October 2022 to 191. The main issues addressed related to: Anxiety, Stress, Relationships • 29 courses were completed by DkIT students, the top two being: • Managing Depression & Low Mood

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Your Sleep • The platform has been able to reaching traditionally underrepresented students, with 35% identifying as being from an ethnic background and 34% identifying as male. It has supported students who otherwise did not engage with support services (64% reported that Togetherall was only form of support and 22% reported having had no additional support, including no friends or family). • Support was given to students considered to be 'at risk' of harm, with 34% of users reporting having considered suicide in the past 6 months and 34% also reporting having self-harmed. • 37% of users were given 1:1 support from online mental health practitioners. • Emergency support outside of traditional hours (over a weekend) was reported to be given on one occasion. The student was then signposted to engage with the counselling service and registered with us on the following Monday morning. <p>The Body Project</p> <p>The Body Project is a group-based intervention that provides a forum for students to confront unrealistic beauty ideals and engages them in the development of healthy body image through verbal, written, and behavioural exercises. The programme is publicised as 'Body Acceptance Classes'. It was hoped that peer facilitators trained last year by student counselling service staff, would be able to run the classes this year but due to personal and academic demands this was not feasible. Two members of the counselling team successfully publicised and co-facilitated the programme in semester two. A DkIT video recorded with SU Vice President for Welfare, was developed on campus to help promote the classes. The video was subsequently offered to all HEIs nationally to use with their own internal promotion of the Body Acceptance classes. A total of 4 participants started the 4- week (1xhr/week) programme. Two participants were unable to complete the course for practical reasons, with two participants successfully completing the programme. One participant expressed an interest in becoming a peer facilitator for future programmes.</p>
Improve	<p>One of the key actions under the SMH Framework this year has been the partnership with The Jed Foundation, a US based charitable organisation that provides colleges and universities with expert support, evidence-based best practices, and data-driven guidance to promote and support student mental health and work towards reducing rates of suicide within the student population. This is a 2 - year process, where we will work with JED, with an Institute Wide Approach on creating a culture of care where all students feel seen and supported.</p> <p>Niteline</p> <p>We continue to partner with Niteline to offer an out of hours support service to students. Niteline is a telephone helpline service offered to students by students from 9 pm until 2:30 am every night during term time. Volunteers are trained and offered support by staff from counselling services across the country.</p> <p>Under this, we review annual statistics including service - related statistics, outcome measures and evaluation forms.</p>

Training Sessions for Staff and Students

Training	Facilitated By	Delivered	Audience
'Safetalk' Suicide Awareness (Half Day)	HSE	Semester 1 & 2	36 staff and students
Understanding Self – Harm (2hrs)	HSE	Semester 2	5 staff
LGBT+ Awareness' (Half Day)	Dundalk Outcomers	Semester 2	10 staff
'Intercultural Awareness' (Half Day)	ICOS	Semester 1	8 staff
Supporting Students in Distress (Half Day)	Counselling Service	Semester 1 and Semester 2	38 staff

SCS Service Statistics

The service continues to use CORE-IMS as our patient information system. This allows for data collection and collation regarding key aspects of service delivery including service outcomes and evaluation.

Clients

341 students registered with the student counselling service during the period 01.09.23 and 31.05.24. This is a reduction in registration figures in comparison with recent years. Semester 1 registrations were comparable to previous years but a reduction in registrations was seen within the second semester.

Table 1: Number of Clients registering with SCS across recent years

17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
345	407	425	312	451	410	341

Of these who registered, 144 students (42%) identified as female, 108 (32%) identified as male. 9 (3%) students identified as transgender or non-binary and 80 students (23%) did not report their gender.

Representation of non-traditional students

Category	2021 – 2022 N (%)	2022 - 2023 N (%)	2023 – 2024 N (%)
International	66 (15%)	70 (17%)	72 (21%)
Mature	93 (21%)	59 (12%)	73 (21%)
Registered with Disability	76 (17%)	22 (5%)	21 (6%)

Appointments

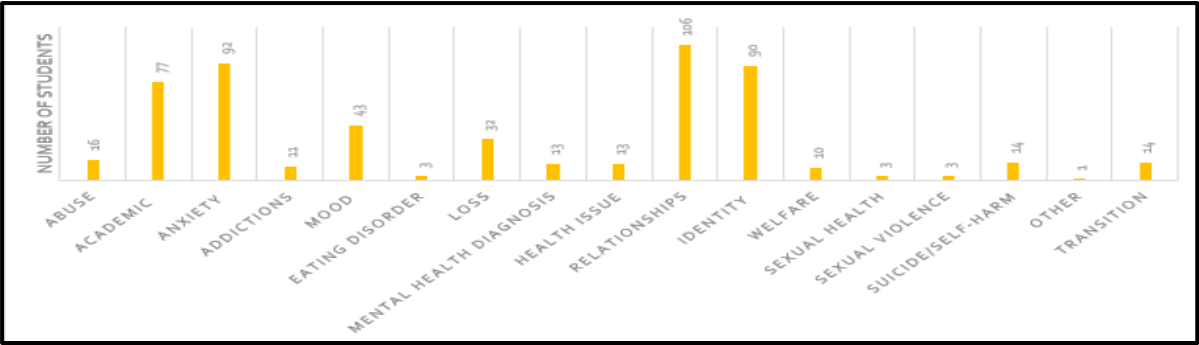
We offered a total of 1,769 appointments for assessment and counselling sessions this year which was a reduction in comparison to 2022 – 2023 (1977). October and November remained our busiest months for assessment and counselling sessions. In addition to scheduled assessment and counselling

appointments, we had 91 students attending ‘drop - in appointment sessions’, bringing total offered appointments up to 1860. Attendance at drop - in sessions were highest in November (n=16), March (n=14) and April (n=14). DNA’s and cancellations were recorded at 6% and 10% respectively. This is similar to overall trends in attendance in the year 2022 – 2023. Looking more closely at the data, it is apparent that missed appointments were more likely to happen during the months of November and December, potentially reflecting increased academic pressures and reduced capacity to attend appointments. Appointments were most frequently cancelled or missed at the treatment stage of the counselling process with 27% of all missed appointments occurring within this stage.

Presenting Issues

Students were most likely to register with the service for support with relationship and interpersonal issues, self-identity and anxiety. This is a change in trend from previous years where anxiety has been the primary reason for referral.

Table 1: Presenting Issues at Referral



Self – Harm and Risk Issues

Data recorded in the year 2023 – 2024 indicated that 38 (11%) students were deemed as being within the clinical range of suicide risk ranging from ‘mild to severe’ at the point of assessment and 21 (6%) were rated as being at ‘mild to moderate’ risk of self – harm. 8 students were supported through the CAMS process this year. Fewer students were deemed at risk of self-harm this year in comparison to last year however the number deemed at risk of suicide was comparable and the number of students supported through the CAMS process was 4 times higher this year than last indicating the value of having the team trained in this model.

Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault

7 clients in total reporting this as a primary presenting issue. This included reported experiences of rape and sexual assault, sexual abuse including childhood sexual abuse and stalking.

8.5.6 Sports and Societies



Sports & Societies
Spóirt & Cumainn

The Sports & Societies Office runs over 65+ student-led clubs and societies so whether students want to pursue an existing interest or try something completely new, there is something for everyone.

The following updates to policies and procedures were introduced during the reporting period:

- The introduction of compulsory sports and society officer training at the beginning of semester one. All clubs and societies had to have at least one committee member in attendance and 68 students attended.
- The introduction of event registration system via the sports and societies Moodle support hub page. Each sports club or society had to register their event prior to holding it. This assisted the sports and societies officer to monitor all events. It also assisted the club/society in organising it as part of the registration form is a checklist such as booking a venue, promotion of the event etc.
- All official society meetings had to have an attendance register which could be spot checked at any stage by the sports and societies officer.
- When applying to host an event which requires financial support from the sports and societies office a proposal must be submitted with a budget plan.
- All sports clubs and societies must submit their committee members via the Microsoft form on the Moodle support hub and all must be student led.
- Each sports coach will receive a maximum of 2 items of sportswear with the DkIT logo.
- Scholarships are reviewed annually and the financial bursary element is decided and confirmed in January and signed off by the Student Services Manager.
- All bus bookings and food orders must be recorded on an excel file.



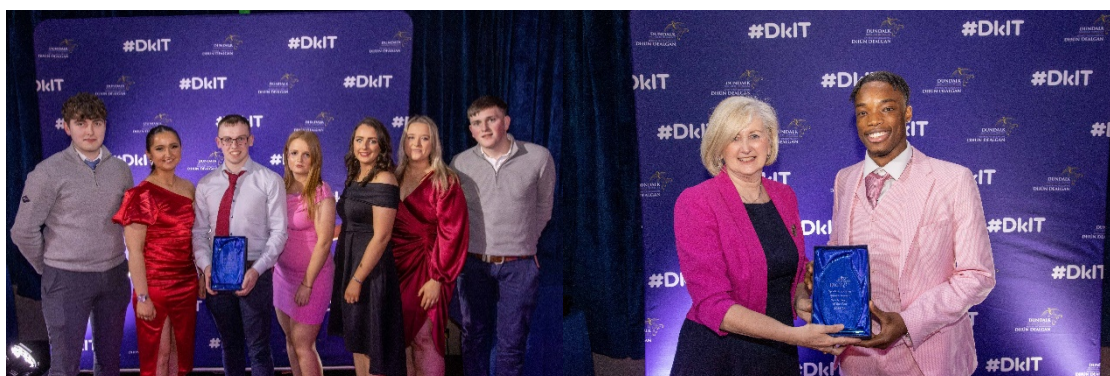
Service Activities and Developments

Last year's feedback stated that if students are not on social media, they may not see the advertisements. To address this sports and societies used a lot more posters around campus and shared all student emails when required. Students also stated last year that at times they found it difficult to make the times of activities. To address this the sports and societies office offered more lunchtime classes however this is something they wish to increase further in the coming year. Some societies struggled last year depending on changeover of personnel on committees. To address this, sports and societies' held training for committee members to assist and support them in the running of a society and to ensure the society doesn't end if certain personnel graduate.

The Gaelic Players Association (GPA) held drop-in sessions on campus and held individual appointments with any county player at DkIT to inform them of the additional financial and career supports they can avail of as a third level county player. Twenty-two students availed of this service and found it extremely beneficial and informative.

This year's sign-up day began with a campaign called "Find Your Tribe" to try and get as many people involved in a club or society on campus as possible. This involved social media campaign and posters etc. Feedback from sign up day highlighted that sometimes it took a bit of time for people to be added to the sports club or society if they missed sign up day. This year this was checked at completed every Friday to ensure this was not a barrier to participation.

Feedback from the Annual Sports and Societies Awards Night last year was very positive so this year's event stuck with the format of having an after party after the awards ceremony. This was held in the Imperial Hotel with over 200 in attendance for the awards ceremony alongside those who attended the afterparty. This event was a huge success and this was reflected in the great attendance from students, staff, sponsors and coaches.



8.5.7 Careers & Employability Centre



Careers and Employability is DkIT's dedicated careers and enterprise service. We're here to support students and graduates identify their career goals, plan for their future and achieve their full personal and professional potential.

DkIT's Careers & Employability Centre (CEC) works to ensure that graduates of DkIT are self-aware, self-resourceful and work ready. To do this, we work with students from first year through to graduation in the area of Career Development support and Student Work Placement. The Centre provides support and informs the employability agenda of DkIT through their work in industry partnerships, research, resource development and participating in local and national employability networks. 2023/24 was an active year for the Careers & Employability Centre, the team continued to deliver a wide range student centred and employability focused services and initiatives. The Centre responded to the student requests and employers interests to build on the bespoke employability events piloted in the previous year. The continued tailoring of employability events in 2023/24 gained positive reaction and feedback from all parties involved and made more progress in linking and showcasing potential career pathways for their chosen area of study.



Our flagship Annual Careers Fair took place in October 2023 with 70+ companies on campus. The lead sponsor for the event was Dole Ireland, and a wide spectrum of local, regional and national companies. Many repeat companies including like Combilift, Intact Software, Controlsoft, UHY Farrelly Dawe White, FitzScientific Prometric, Kaseya, ABP Foods and Grant Thornton and community and voluntary organisations Louth Sports Partnership and Peter McVerry Trust, each of whom came to DkIT and spent hours with our students.

In total we had 8 on-campus themed career events on 2023/24. Whilst these events were led by the Careers & Employability Centre, a key contributor to their success was that each event was developed in partnership with the academic schools and programmes. Two of these events were provided with financial support from the N-TUTORR funding, which increased participation and engagement from Schools.

- Nursing & Midwifery Careers Event (22nd November 2023)
- Careers & Teaching Event (December 2023)
- Creative Careers Event (23rd February 2024 – sponsored by N-TUTORR)
- Business & Humanities Careers Event (27th February 2024 – sponsored by N-TUTORR)
- Engineering Futures Careers Event (20th March 2024)
- Tech Careers Event (1st May 2024)

The Centre also supported a range of employer talks and school led Career and Alumni insights such as the Veterinary Nursing Career Insights Panel, Career Paths in Science, Agriculture Careers Morning, Teacher Training in the UK, Unlock Your Potential Careers in Sport Seminar, Engineering Lunch n' Learns and Tech Masterclass Series.



The significantly increased number of themed employability fairs, events, workshops was in direct response to the calls from previous student surveys and employers surveys which called for specific events tailored to their areas of study.

Student Work Placement 2023/'24

DkIT's Careers & Employability Centre demonstrates its commitment to supporting student success by adapting to increased demand and providing resources for students navigating the transition back to in-person learning. 745 students across 31 undergraduate programs, 7 postgraduate program (incl 7 6 Springboard courses) prepared for work placement. Slight increase on 2022-23 figures of 739.

- The School of Health & Science supplies the largest number of student placements, with 34.5% (247 students) of total student placements at DkIT. With programmatic review there is a strong possibility that additional programmes from the School of Health & Science will have placement modules added. Placement preparation for the first cohort of Students due out on Placement on the BSc in Nutrition and Health will commence in 2024.
- This is followed by the School of Business & Humanities with 30% (215 students) of total student placements at DkIT.
- The School of Engineering saw 135 students prepared for placement, making up 18.7% of the total DkIT placement numbers. There will be a new intake of students to the BSc Hons in Quantity Surveying who will have placement in Jan 2027. The placement office welcomes this programme as it will cater to the needs of the Built Environment companies currently engaged with the DKIT Placement office
- The School of Informatics & Creative Arts saw 106 student placements representing 16.5% of total DkIT student placements. Placements in the School of Informatics & Creative Arts will continue to increase in 2024 and 2025 years with 2 new placement programmes coming on board including a BSc (Hons) in Mathematics & Data Science and the BSc Hons in Computer System Operations. The first set of students due for placement on these programmes are due out in Jan 2025. These new programmes reflect business needs of the workplace as it becomes more tech-driven and fast paced, and skills needed for data analysis are going to play an increasing role in business.
- **Focus on Veterinary Nursing:** The Centre successfully accommodated a significant rise (almost double) in first-year veterinary nursing students seeking placements.

DkIT Placement Numbers and Trends

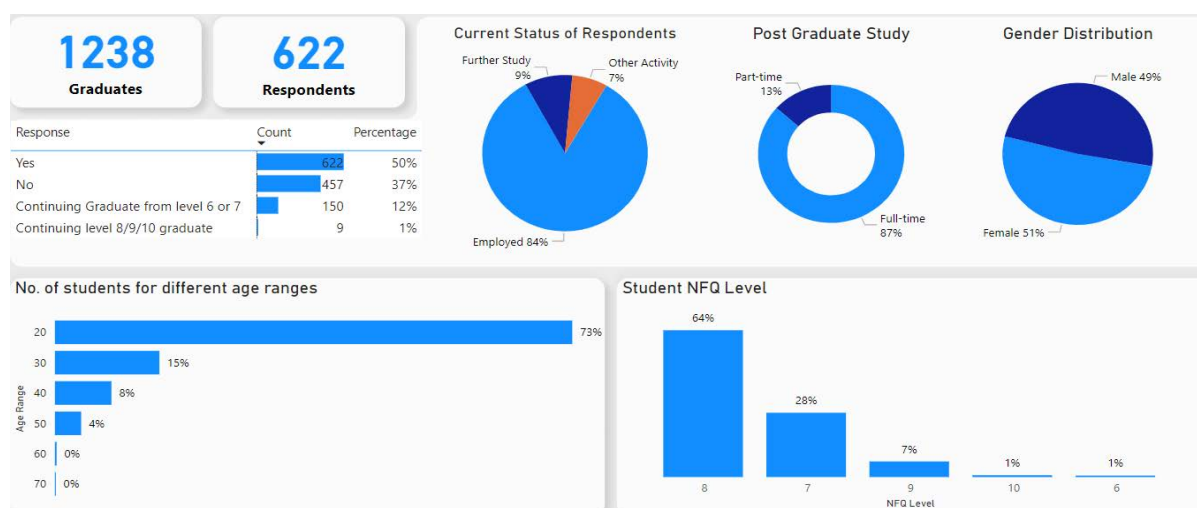
School	2023-2024	2022-2024	2021 - 2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
School of Health and Science	287	277	316	303	297	278
School of Informatics and Creative Arts	126	104	137	69	98	95
School of Business and Humanities	203	205	227	222	267	282
School of Engineering	129	124	123	122	64	87
TOTALS	745	710	803	716	726	742

Further to the Student Services Self-Assessment Report (2023), an extra student engagement session “Post Placement reflection” has been implemented with the Placement office for students returning to the campus after placement. This is still a work in progress where first feedback sessions were held in the 2nd semester 2024. The hope is to develop more robust reporting around such topics as remuneration and key feedback for future students.

Graduate Outcomes Survey 2023 (the 2022 graduate cohort)

The Careers & Employability Centre conducted their Annual Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) between June and July 2023. The Centre employed the skills of a DkIT Data Analytics graduate as a consultant to build an online, interactive dashboard to present the GOS data. This dashboard was developed using MS PowerBi. This work will be of value across the Institute for quality assurance, academic and programme development, marketing and employability. The intention is that this interactive dashboard will be further developed in 2024/25.

Below are the key data points of the GOS 2023 using images from the DkIT GOS Dashboard:



- 93% in employment and/or further study in 2023 Compared to 95% in 2022
- Response rate of 57.1% an increase of almost 10% from 47.8% in 2022.
- Response rate was almost equal split female: male, i.e. 51% female, 49% male
- Total of 84% in employment, compared to 89% in 2022
- Total of 9% in FT/PT education, it was 6% in 2022
- Unemployment was 5% v's 4% in 2022

Activity Type	2023/24	2022/23
No. of Student Appointments	498 – Careers (232 unique students) 421 – Placement (1-to-1 appts)	384- Careers (264 unique students) 579 – Placement (1-to-1 appts)
No. of Class Sessions (if relevant to your service)	28 Careers Sessions 99 placement workshops	38 – Career Sessions 126 placement workshops
No. of Workshops/Training Sessions Delivered to students (if relevant)	15 Careers Workshops <i>CV, Interview, Elevate Award workshops, grad Ireland, school careers events presentations.</i>	10 – Careers Workshops <i>CV, Interview, Elevate Award workshops, gradireland</i>
No. of Workshops/Training Sessions delivered to staff (if relevant)	8 <i>Staff inductions, school programme boards, employability framework sessions</i>	6 <i>1st year convenor sessions, Quality Review sessions, Placement Guideline sessions</i>
No. of external agency workshops / training your service hosted (if relevant)	15 events <i>Gradireland, AHECS, Lifelong Guidance, Louth Leader Partnership, Dundalk Chamber</i>	18 events <i>Gradireland, Enterprise Hub, Creative Spark, Regional Skills</i>

As with previous years we have ongoing challenges in engaging students on our DkIT Careers Connect platform and our Careers Hub Moodle resources. We have made efforts to increase awareness of this via social media posts, class presentations, and incorporating slides on Placement Preparation sessions. However, student engagement is still falling short of the level we would like to see. We do think a concerted effort in awareness raising sessions with academics and class representatives via the Student Union in 2024/'25 should result in increased engagement.

Moodle

The Student Support Hub on Moodle is the central repository for hosting all careers information, resources and templates. The extensive career toolkit is updated annually and reflects the ongoing development to support response employability skills development. Our key portal DkIT Careers Connect and online resources of Shortlist Me Video Interviewing practice platform, Profiling for success – Psychometric Testing, are all accessible via Moodle. In 2023/24, the Careers Hub on Moodle achieved 550 logins, which is similar to 2022/23. We would have aimed for increased engagement this year, and will need to explore further mechanisms to improve awareness and engagement with this Moodle resources

Student Appointments

All student appointments were offered in person, MS Teams or Phone. In 2023-'24 the Centre facilitated 498 appointments, an increase of decrease of 22% (385) appointments, on 2022/'23.

Job Opportunities / Graduate Programmes

A total of 538 positions were advertised in the academic year 2023/24 on DkIT Careers Connect portal, by separate 304 companies, this is a decrease of 26.5% on the previous year of 732 opportunities. This could be due to the limited engagement of students and recent graduate on the portal and employers are looking to other ways of promoting their opportunities to students and graduates. Student engagement on jobs portal remains an ongoing priority, as well as monitoring alternative promotional and advertising mechanisms.

Student Inductions

The Centre participated in the wider Student Services inductions including the services specific spotlights for 1st years, advanced entry, international etc. alongside the video inputs for online student resources.

Class Sessions and Workshops

With over 40 careers workshops and sessions delivered in 2023/'24 we have developed a stronger in class presence, which has been requested via our student survey feedback. This is also a useful tool for service promotion and awareness among staff, who are key to sign posting students to our supports and resources.

Employability Tools

As with previous years, we renewed licences for specific online tools including DkIT Careers Connect (Online Portal for job postings, careers appointments, event promotion) Profiling for Success (Psychometric tests and practice tests), Shortlist Me (online video interviewing practice platform). These are central to supporting self-directed research, skills development and greatly enhance the in-person meetings and workshops delivered by the team. However, we will review student engagement numbers in 2024/'25 for ShortlistMe to if the assess level of impact is worth the significant investment.

Social Media & Communications

The Centre has developed a targeted social media plan, sustaining focused effort on using the Instagram and LinkedIn platforms as the preferred social media platforms. We have proactively worked with the wider student services teams and the student union to increase awareness amongst students of our social media activity.

In 2023/'24 we started a social media campaign of a suite of fun, engaging and informative posts covering key careers insights and tips. This has also proven effective with our students and employers. The Jobs of the Month social media campaign continues to be a useful awareness raising message, and is appreciated by our employers.



8.6 Internal Monitoring and Review

Student services request feedback from service users as part of their annual monitoring activities. Feedback is reviewed on an ongoing basis with service providers and annually as part of the Service Annual Report (<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/institute-reports-and-publications/student-services-annual-reports/student-services-annual-reports.html>). Service Providers participate on national committees and review their service in line with national standards and best practice. Work plans and resources are reviewed in line with feedback, best practice and the Institute's strategic plan.

A Quality Enhancement Plan was developed by the Services in September 2023, to support the implementation of the recommendations from the periodic quality review which took place in 2022/23. This plan was approved by the Institutes Executive and workplans developed by the individual services. An institute - wide student survey was conducted to gather feedback in relation to students' awareness, understanding and experience of the service. The following is a summary of the data from that survey relevant to each service and also data from monitoring activities for the individual services for the reporting period 2023/2024:

Disability Service Monitoring

A student disability survey was issued to 320 students, disappointingly only 33 students completed the survey, however a question targeted at 1st years to ascertain how they felt induction was for them, of the 17 new 1st years who completed the survey, all were satisfied with their transition to DkIT and most of them made contact with the DS in advance of starting in DkIT. A recurring theme from the survey is that Students need more social spaces, more spaces to sit in main reception areas while awaiting lifts etc., particularly those with physical or mobility difficulties. They also need some programme enhancements to make them more inclusive for students with a disability e.g. project, group work, deadlines.

By being part of the Disability Advisory Workers Network (DAWN), we are consistently benchmarking our services, keeping up to date on legislation and new advances in technology and resources and best practice to support students with disabilities. DAWN provides a forum for Disability Officers to share expertise, develop knowledge and skills and collaborate on policies and procedures for supporting students with disabilities in higher education. DAWN works towards developing professional standards and best practices for student inclusion and professionalises the role of the Disability Officer. The collaboration among all the Disability Officers across HEIs allows us to share knowledge and helps strengthen the DS. DAWN also influences the allocation of and criteria for the Fund for Students with Disabilities. Being part of DAWN provides the DS with professional development opportunities, helps establish standards, promotes inclusive education, enables knowledge sharing and gives a collective voice to advocate for and support students with disabilities.

Student Counselling Service

In the general survey sent to all students 50 of 189 respondents (26%) reported having attended the student counselling service. The main reason cited for not accessing the service was not having felt in need of the service (35%) while others availed of supports from other services, including the online platform ‘Togetherall’, family or friends (21%). 16% cited lack of time as a barrier to engaging and 11% reported either not being aware of the service or not being sure of what attending would involve.

80% of students who reported attending the service were ‘very’ (60%) or ‘somewhat’ (20%) satisfied with their experience. 12% were either ‘very’ (4%) or ‘somewhat (8%) dissatisfied’ with their experience and 8% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Additional comments were not provided by these students unfortunately to help identify what had impacted negatively on their experiences. Students indicated multiple primary benefits from their contact with the service, including feeling listened to, heard and understood (56%); being helped to understand and manage the difficulties they were having (50%), reducing levels of distress (34%) and importantly, helping students to remain in college (28%). These are considered core outcomes in relation to service objectives.

The following statistics are drawn from CIAO, a standardised measure of ‘Counselling Impact on Academic Outcomes’ used across colleges in the UK.

Table 1: Pre- and Post-CIAO Scores

Question	Responses	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
To what extent are you considering leaving your course because of your problems?	Not at all Only occasionally Sometimes Often Most of the time	20 (44%) 9 (20%) 10 (22%) 4 (9%) 2 (4%)	23 (51%) 13 (29%) 7 (16%) 1 (2%) 1 (2%)
To what extent would you say your problems are affecting your study?	Not at all Only occasionally Sometimes Often Most of the time	1 (2%) 8 (18%) 12 (27%) 15 (33%) 9 (20%)	5 (11%) 14 (31%) 12 (27%) 11 (24%) 3 (7%)

To what extent would you say your problems are affecting your overall experience at university?	Not at all	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
	Only occasionally	4 (9%)	19 (42%)
	Sometimes	14 (31%)	11 (24%)
	Often	18 (40%)	10 (22%)
	Most of the time	8 (18%)	3 (7%)

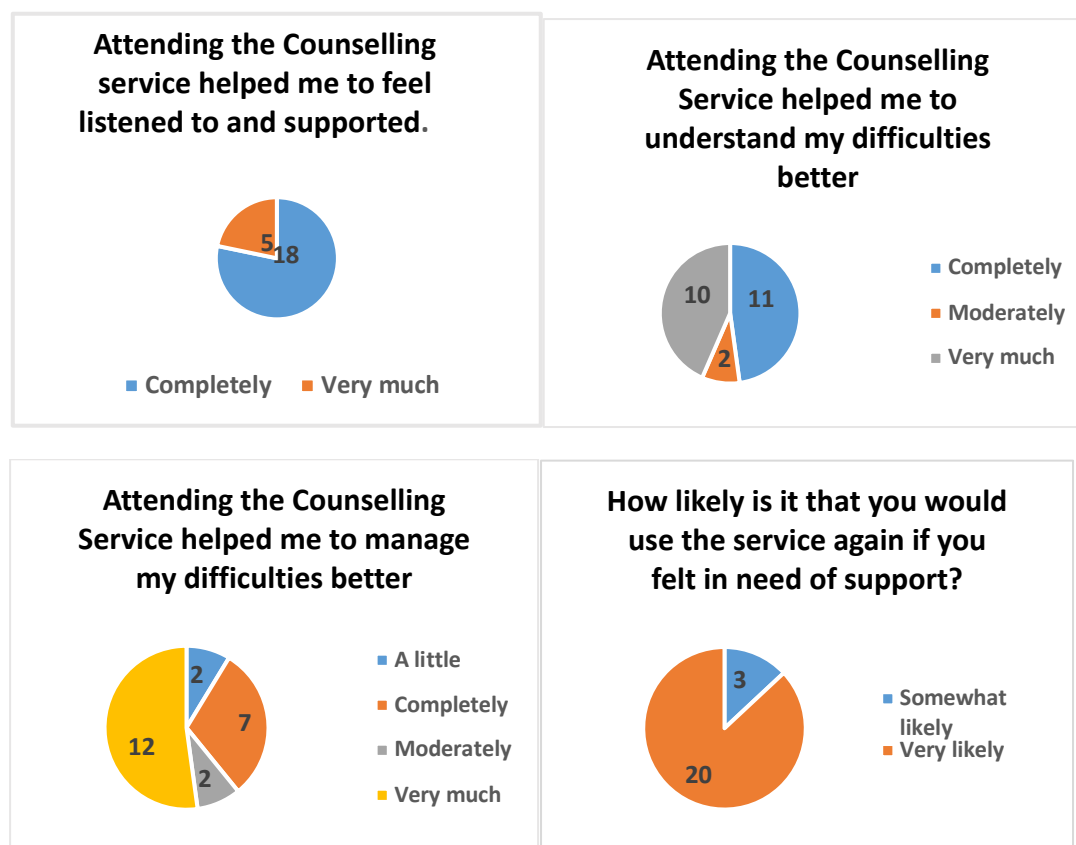
The responses indicate improvements across all areas of academic engagement. A further six questions were asked as part of the post-intervention CIAO measure. Responses to these questions are summarised below:

- 86% said that counselling helped them stay in college. For 15% it was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in college.
- 96% said it helped them do better in their academic work. For 21% it was an important or most significant factor in doing better at their academic work.
- 93% said it had improved their overall experience of college/university. For 21% it was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in improving their college experience.
- 96% said counselling has helped them develop skills that might be useful in obtaining future employment. For 34% it was an important or most significant factor.
- 96% said that counselling has improved their self-esteem. For 34% it was an important or most significant factor in improving their self - esteem.
- 94% said that counselling had helped them feel more positive about the future. For 28% this was an important or most significant factor in feeling more positive about the future.

These figures demonstrate the impact of counselling not just on well-being and self -esteem but on retention and their performance in college, both of which are key factors associated with longer term wellbeing as well as being key performance indicators for the Institute.

Service Evaluation

In addition to the use of outcome measures to assess level of progress made by students in relation to presenting issues and impact of counselling on academic outcomes, the service uses feedback forms to gather data on service user experience. This year 23 students completed the service feedback form. This is a low response rate indicating a need for us to consider how this can be improved. Responses are outlined in the tables that follow:



Pastoral Care

A total of 190 students completed the general survey. 125 students were aware of the Pastoral Care Service and 65 students were not. I feel that this is a good result. The Pastoral Care service has worked hard to increase the awareness of the service and to increase engagement.

Most students surveyed stated that they used the Pastoral Care service for advice and guidance (13) and also for events (15). 6 had stated they used the service for financial support. This would not be an accurate reflection of the quantity of students who used the service albeit it's worth mentioning only a small proportion student actually completed the survey. Some suggestions about how to improve the service worth noting are increased advertising of the service and what exactly it is. More regular trips like hiking, tours etc Holding workshops and wellbeing classes after 5pm for students who get little time off during the day. More talks on wellbeing and stress management.

Student Health Unit (SHU)

During this academic year the SHU invited service users to complete an online anonymous survey (MS Forms) to evaluate their overall experience of the service. These forms were collated and reviewed.

- ✓ 95% expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the overall treatment received in the SHU
- ✓ 97% positive experience with the nurse
- ✓ 86% positive experience with the doctor

- ✓ 97% would recommend this service to a friend
- ✓ 69% satisfaction with online virtual appointments

A number of students expressed dissatisfaction that the service provided was limited in its offering or not as comprehensive as in General Practice eg; requesting blood testing and also that the number of doctors hours on campus limited. In the recent end of year student services survey showed 68% of the overall student population attended the SHU and reported a high degree of satisfaction with the service provided. 8% were unaware that the service is free of charge

Sports and Societies

Feedback at the end of the academic year was very positive with 80% of those who completed the general student services surveying having engaged in sports and societies. Of these users most stated they joined to meet new friends and have fun. Of the 20% those who did not engage found that they either had too much college work, part time work or a lack of follow up from the club itself which is something we need to improve on. While we have tried to improve lunch time activities this is still something that came up in feedback so we are hoping to improve this also.

Qualitative feedback was received via Microsoft forms after sign up day, the sports and societies officer training event and at the end of the academic year. Participants for these surveys were recruited by scanning a QR code on the day at the event or by scanning a QR code on posters located on campus. Scholarship students all completed a Microsoft form at the end of the academic year also. Quantitative data was received from sign up day via a Microsoft form and is used to monitor the amount of sign-ups each year.

The results of the above forms indicated 1773 sign ups were completed in sign up day and the following two weeks after it. New sign ups were added to the clubs and societies weekly if needed (i.e., if they missed sign up day) as this was something that was highlighted in last year's feedback. This led to an additional 32 sign ups. This was slightly down on last year's figures.

<i>Sign up 2020</i>	<i>Sign Up 2021</i>	<i>Sign Up 2022</i>
1506	1575	2379

68 sports and society officers attended the office training day and found it very beneficial. Some highlighted a need for role specific training in the future for example social media training etc for the PRO.

Scholarship students (93 students) found the bi-annual meetings with staff very beneficial. From these meetings staff were able to provide additional support and also sign post students to additional services which students required such as the disability service, physiotherapy and careers support. As a result of this positive feedback, we also monitored the retention rate of scholarship students and found that the retention rates of scholarship students are higher than regular students. See below:

Progression Statistics	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total
2021/22	69%	78%	86%	86%	77%
2020/21	77%	85%	90%	82%	81%
2019/20	78%	88%	93%	89%	84%
2018/19	78%	83%	84%	92%	82%
2017/18	77.9%	82.8%	87.5%	91.3%	83%

At times this year the office was extremely busy however we ensured we kept our response time to students to be as efficient as possible but this can be challenging at peak times of the year with limited staff.

The sports and societies office were part of a national SAR with Student Sport Ireland. According to this report DkIT spends a lot less (current spend €37000) than other institutes on scholarships. DkIT also falls behind in terms of sports facilities in particular indoor facilities. It does however rank high in terms of outdoor sports facilities and gym facilities. The sports and societies office is currently operating with one full time staff member which can be challenging at times and when compared with other institutes across Ireland is a lot less with others such as TUD having 19 full time staff and Maynooth University having 7.

In terms of sports performances, DkIT offers a wide range of competitive sports teams and some of the highlights this year were: DkIT Freshers GAA team won Division 2, Ladies gaelic team won Division 3, Fiachra O Dhuill won the college handball open and Dearbhla Tinnelly won the National Colleges Boxing title. It was also great to see some sports teams competing which have not competed in recent years such as athletics, table tennis and fencing.

Careers and Employability (CES)

CEC uses annual GOS, feedback from employer events (via MS FORMs surveys), and feedback from students on careers appointments, workshops and events to inform career engagement action plans. Placement Office also uses feedback from surveys with students and employers to inform placement support and development. Placement Officers are invited to sit on Programme Boards / Placement Working Groups within academic departments.

End of Year Student Service Survey 2023/'24– Careers & Employability: The survey outlines that there is a reasonable level of student awareness of the service, however, engagement is just over a third of the student body, which leaves much room for improvement.

- 41% outlined they did use the Careers Service, and the reason for not using the service including; lack of awareness, did not feel I needed the support, too early in my studies
- The top 3 resources that students are availing of include;

- ◆ Careers Fairs, Careers Workshops, Careers Hub on Moodle
- Of those who did use the Careers Service 91% were either very satisfied (55%) or satisfied (36%) with their experience
- The top 3 benefits identified by students using the service include: Gained more information/awareness on my career/study options", "Gained practical skills/knowledge on careers tools including CV, interviews, etc.", "Felt more prepared to achieve career goals".

Careers 1-to-1 Appointments

- 100% agreed scheduling their appointment was easy, (matching previous 2 years 2022/23; 2021/22)
- 100% agreed their Careers Advisor paid attention to their query (an increase of 4% on previous year),
- 100% agreed their Careers Advisor was knowledgeable and 95% stated their expectations were met based on their conversation with their career advisor
- 70% agreed they were able to identify what their next steps would be, which is a minor decrease of 4% on previous year. Again 100% took action based on the conversation with their careers advisor which has been maintained from previous year.
- 100% agreed that talking to Careers Advisor was valuable and would return if further assistance was required, retaining this from previous year.

CIBYL SURVEY

This is a national Student and Graduate Survey of all Higher Education Careers Services in Ireland and UK. For 2024, the research was conducted between September 2023 – January 2024, with 13,895 total responses, 789 of which were DKIT respondents. It is available here - [Cibyl Graduate Research IRE 2024 - DKIT - Partner Report.pdf](#). DKIT participate in this survey, as part of national benchmarking and as a student feedback mechanism specific to our service. See below some of the key points:

Engagement

2 in 3 students expressed that they are confident that they know where to go for careers advice. Interestingly, those who haven't used careers a slightly more confident, indicating that this cohort are aware of services, and this is not a barrier for engagement.

- 56% of your students have used their careers service, when they have engaged they are most likely to have attended a careers event.
- 44% have not used the career service, a significantly higher proportion of students when compared to the national average.
- Reasons cited for non-engagement include being it being too early in their studies or them being too busy, a trend that has increased since 2023.

Service Satisfaction

Overall student satisfaction with the careers service has increased by 6% this year, with 61% indicating satisfaction (2023 55% 2022 54%, 2021 44%, 2020 74%).

- First-year students are your most satisfied cohort, where your finalist students are the most likely to select neutral.
- Among various service aspects, your students express the highest satisfaction with the usefulness and availability of face-to-face appointment – more so than the national average.
- Similarly to the national average, virtual career fairs received the lowest satisfaction ratings from your students

DkIT Student Feedback on how to persuade students to engage with the Careers Service. The personalisation and specific targeting of student groups, alongside embedding career learning into the curriculum is the recurring theme on how best to engage students.

DkIT Placement Office Feedback

The Placement Office survey student and host sites each year via MS Forms. See some feedback from the various student and employers for 2023/'24.

Host Sites

- “We highly recommended the DKIT Placement Programme. It is very well run and organised by the faculty. The students are skilled, hardworking and creative. They have made a valuable contribution to the organisation and have fit in well with the team at Photo Museum Ireland.”
- “We are delighted to have developed a strong link with DKIT in relation to their work placement student programme. The students are always very motivated, keen to learn and make a positive contribution to the programmes they assist in delivering. We look forward to further develop this link in the future.” Monaghan GAA Coaching & Games Dept.
- “All students we've had to date from DkIT across two courses have been first class. We've had placement students from Ulster University/St Mary's College/Stranmillis/SRC and the DkIT students we've had are as good as any we've had over the last number of years. Healthy Kidz

Students

- “My work placement experience was extremely positive. It was something I was excited and nervous about. In the first 2 or 3 days I was extremely nervous but before the end of the first week i was fully settled in. Seeing people be enthusiastic to have me around and be willing to teach me was a very encouraging thing for me.” - 3rd year Audio & Music Production student
- “My placement at The Pet Hospital in Waterford City couldn't have been better. I was supported and helped every day and gently encouraged to learn new skills under supervision.

The staff clearly love their job and were so good at teaching/helping me as well. It was a pleasure to work with people who love their job.”- 1st year Veterinary Nursing

- “I greatly enjoyed my time working with the Careers & Employability team, [...the team] were very supportive. Any ideas I had were backed and I was allowed to run with them. If changes were needed during my time, we had a meeting to discuss and adjustments made efficiently and effectively. I look forward to utilising their services while deciding on next steps for September and returning for 4th year!” - 3rd Year Business and Tech

8.7 Community Engagement and Outreach

DkIT has an important role to play in engaging with the local community and beyond. Some of the Student Services community outreach initiatives for 2023/24 are listed below:

Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DkIT nominee on the board of Louth Leader Partnership • Member of Mature Students Ireland (MSI) • Member of the HEAR scheme’s Income Advisory Board • DkIT representative on the College Connect HEI - PATH 2 and PATH 3 committees of the MEND cluster
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of DARE/HEAR Practitioners Group • Member of DARE Appeal and Review Committee • Member of DAWN – Disability Advisors Working Network • Careers Fairs. • Member of HEI Festival of Autism Acceptance Committee – NCIRL, NCAD, CCT, ATU, AsIAm, DCU
Careers & Employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC represent DkIT on national forums including the Head of Careers & Employability as a Director and Treasurer of AHECS (2022-2024). • Presented at the Department of Education, Lifelong Guidance Network Event, held in Dublin Castle on Tuesday 7th May, representing AHECS as a model of best practice in the Higher Education sector. • Delivered 2 separate Career Decision Making and the Growth Mindset sessions to the Headstart Programme in October 2024. This programme is a partnership with DkIT and Louth Leader Partnership to support adult members of the community who are considering third level education. • Delivered to Louth Leader Partnership, International Women’s Day. • Grad Ireland Careers Fair- CV Clinic Participants • CEC delivered workshops on Interview Success, and Virtual Interviewing at Grad Ireland Live in March 24 • Contributing Judge at Grad Ireland – Category- Graduate Employer of the Year 2023 (Awards April 2024) • Opening and Networking of the Volumetric Building Companies- May 2024
Pastoral Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination of Daffodil Day on campus raising €450.65
Student Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education Institutes (PCHEI). All members of the team are members of PCHEI which offers support with professional development). The Head of Service sits on the Executive Committee with another member of the team participating on the ‘Service Reps’ group. • Framework manager sits on the National Speakout Practitioner’s Network which was responsible for analysing and reporting on the national data from ‘Speakout’ Reporting Tool.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged with HSE Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention to facilitate trainings for DKIT campus on suicide prevention in 2023/2024 Co - hosted with Women's Aid, an information stand organised by the Library, around the issue of Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Harassment and our services. Engaged with 'Irish Council for International Students' (ICOS) to organise training for staff in 23/24 on Cultural Awareness. Head of Counselling represents DkIT on the 'Connecting for Life Local implementation group'. Head of Counselling participated in HEA Healthy Campus Conference 'Panel Discussion' as a representative of HEI Student Counselling Services.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with voluntary groups and continued collaboration and care planning with local community mental health teams and services. Engagement in with the Health Promotion & Improvement officer, Health & Wellbeing Division Louth Meath area. Members of the ISHA – Irish Student Health Association group. Ongoing engagement with HSE vaccination teams. Regular contact with our nursing colleagues in the other institutes HEI's information sharing and service development planning. Communication with public health to monitor and inform all sources of infectious diseases to enable all control measures to be put in place.
Sports & Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with 13 schools to provide tours of the sports facilities and sports activities and inform them about sports and societies and sports scholarships (alongside the school liaison officer). Hosted fitness testing days for scholarship partners Louth GAA academy squads Organised Dundalk 10k run- Over 1000 athletes competed. We make a donation from this event to a charity parent and this year's charity partner was SAFE Castlebellingham (Suicide Awareness for Everyone). Lennon Cup All Stars- Hosted the U-18 GAA schools All Star team which is now sponsored by Ganson and in conjunction with Louth GAA. Rugby Future Stars- Sponsor and hosted U-18 Rugby All-star team for boys and girls. Hosted in conjunction with Leinster Rugby Sponsor and hosted the DkIT/FAI Schools North East League All-Stars Hub for Leinster Rugby North East Squads Sports scholarship open night to inform potential students of the sports scholarship programme Sponsorship agreement with Dundalk based company Control soft who now sponsor the GAA club. Liaised with Dundalk Parkrun to ensure safe usage of the walking track for their local event every Saturday which caters for approximately 200 runners/walkers. Sports scholarships with Louth GAA, Swords Thunder Basketball, Drogheda Wolves, and Louth LGFA. Liaison with Louth Mavericks American Football Club and Dundalk Cricket Club to engage students in their clubs as we do not have enough members to have teams at DkIT. Had 18 TY students complete their TY work experience as part of the sports and societies office from schools in the North East.

8.8 Staff, Training and Professional Development

This section details staff training during the reporting period 2023/2024

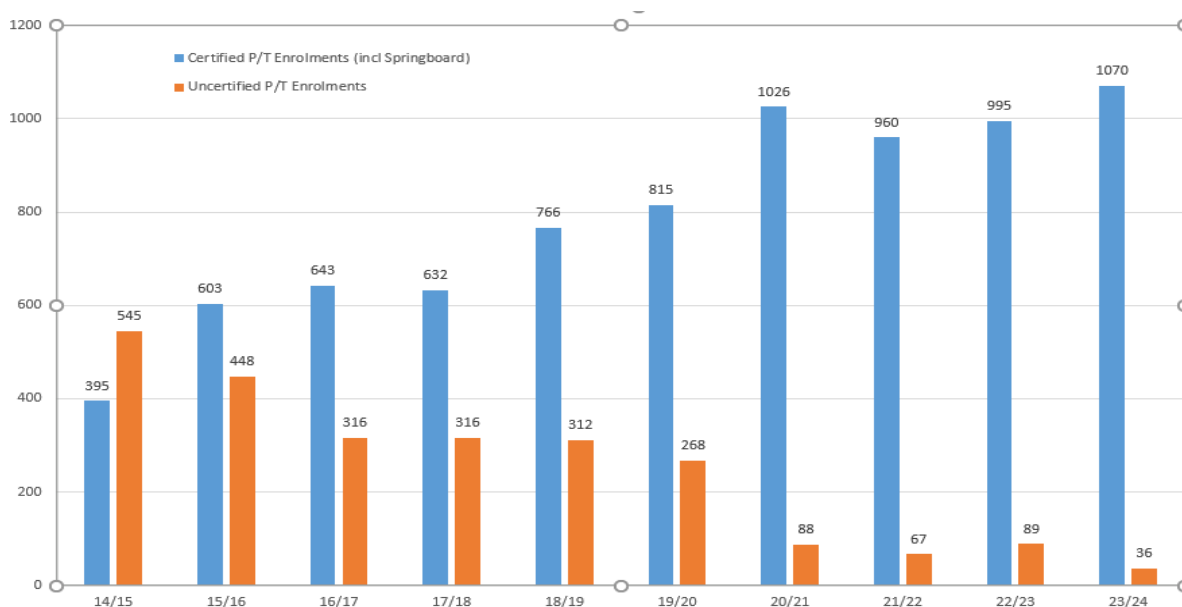
Service	Training
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Learning Forum TUD March 2024 Access Seminars TUD May 2024 HEA Progression conference Feb 2024 Student Affairs Ireland Seminar June 2024.
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Member of the Disability Advisory Workers Network (DAWN). Member of DARE Review and Appeals Panel
Pastoral Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completed a three-month course in Coaching with Neuroscience completed a Level Certification in Breathwork Teacher Training. <i>Completed Shadow Work Course</i>
Student Counselling Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Day 'Ecotherapy Training' attended by all members of the team 'Certificate in Adolescent Studies' completed by 2 members of the team 'Mindfulness for Emerging Adults' (MIEA) Teacher Training Programme completed by 1 member of the team CAMS (<i>Clinical Assessment and Management of Suicidality</i>) Training completed by 3 members of the team, meaning all members of the team are trained in this approach. Suicide Post-vention Workshop attended by Head of Counselling 'Cultural Awareness' Training attended by one member of the team 'Disclosure Training' attended by one member of the team 'Safetalk - Suicide Awareness' Training attended by one member of the team Understanding Self – Harm' Training attended by one member of the team <p>Conferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCHEI 2 - day Training Conference (Cultural Humility and Attachment in Therapeutic Relationships) attended by 4 members of the team. 'A Whole Institute Approach to Wellbeing' – HEA Healthy Campus Conference attended by Head of Service Framework Manager attended the 'National Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference' Framework Manager attended the 'UCD Dignity and Respect Conference' - Building Capacity to Provide Support in Irish Higher Education <p>Members of the team participate in 'Communities of Practice' to support best practice in relation to the implementation of CAMS, The Body Project and Togetherall.</p>
Careers & Employability Service	<p>CEC staff availed of approximately 25 separate Training and CPD opportunities in 2023/24 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team attendance and contribution to AHECS CPD Training events Regular lunch and learn events, Careers Practitioners Empowering Futures: Solutions-Oriented Discussions for Career Professionals and AHECS Awards Showcase RCSI 25th April 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BNY Mellon Outreach Event – May 2024 • Women in Stem Event Croke Park Mar 12th, 2024 • CEC staff encouraged to avail of DCM learning and LinkedIn learning online opportunities. • Attended DkIT Diversity Week sessions, February 2024. • Head of Careers & Employability accepted on to the HEAdvance Fellowship Programme, funded by N-Tutorr. This will be completed in 2024/'25
Health Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Sepsis Management for Adults including Maternity • HSE Cyber Security Awareness • Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing • Talking about Overweight and Obesity • LGBT + Awareness Training: the basics • Trist in Care- An Introduction • Fundamentals of Care: Pressure Ulcers • AMRIC Hand Hygiene • Dignity at Work (Revised 2022) • Amric Basics of Infection Prevention and Control • Cyber Security Awareness • Making Conversations Easier • An Introduction to Childrens First • Wound Care Updates for GP Nurses • Sexual Violence Awareness and Disclosure Training • Working Sensitively with Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault • Contraception Updates for GP Nurses • An Overview of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) including Testing Approaches • SafeTALK • Minding autistic minds conference – Mark
Sports and Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand Up and Speak Out Training (provided by N-tutorr) to assist in public speaking at events • Excel tips and tricks (provided by N-tutorr) to assist with keeping up to date order records • Currently a member of the healthy campus working group • Currently chair of the physical activity sub-group • Currently a member of the ending sexual violence working group • Was a member of the student experience sub-group as part of the wider DkIT strategic Planning group. • Chair of the LGFA National Strategic Plan (launched in 2024) • Was a member of the Louth Local Sports Partnership for the last year • Currently a member of the stadium funding working group with Louth GAA • Currently a Gaelic 4 Teens Ambassador with the LGFA • Presented at the Women in Sport Day in Malahide hosted by the LGFA (Feb 24). • A member of Student Sport Ireland and was a member of the Self-Assessment Review Working Group which launched their report this year.

9. Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC)



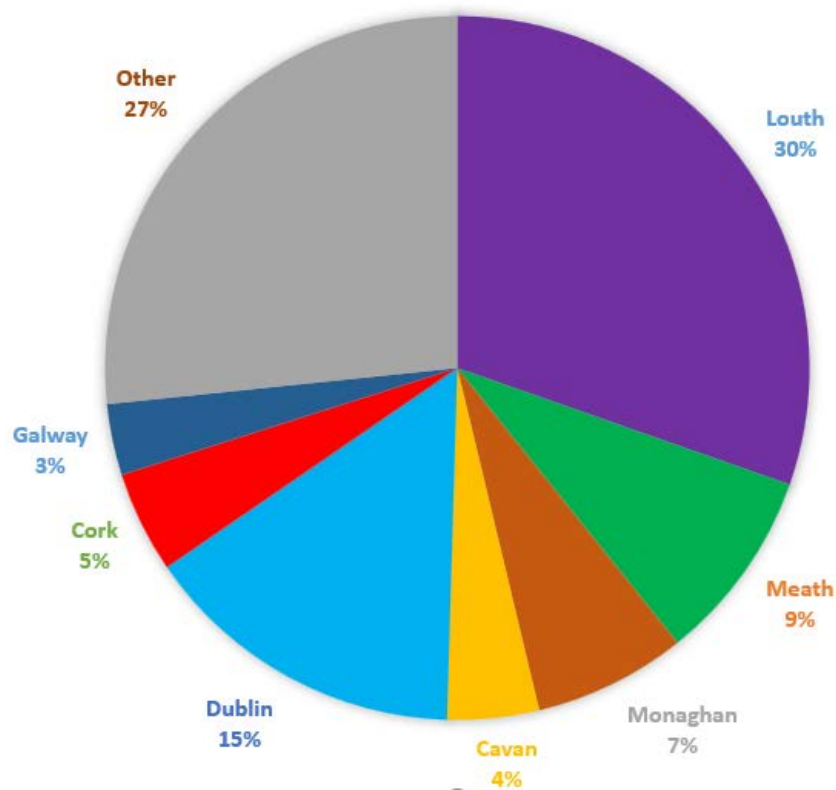
Part-time student certified enrolments (incl. Springboard) for 2023/24 were **1070**. This is up **7.5%** on AY22/23. Enrolments have climbed 170% over the past decade with part-timers now accounting for 21% of DkIT's total student headcount. Certified enrolments make up 97% of DkIT's total part-time student cohort up from 42% in AY14/15. The Lifelong Learning Office processed 1,675 applications during AY23/24 compared with 1,568 in AY22/23 (+7%).



Source: HEA / LLC

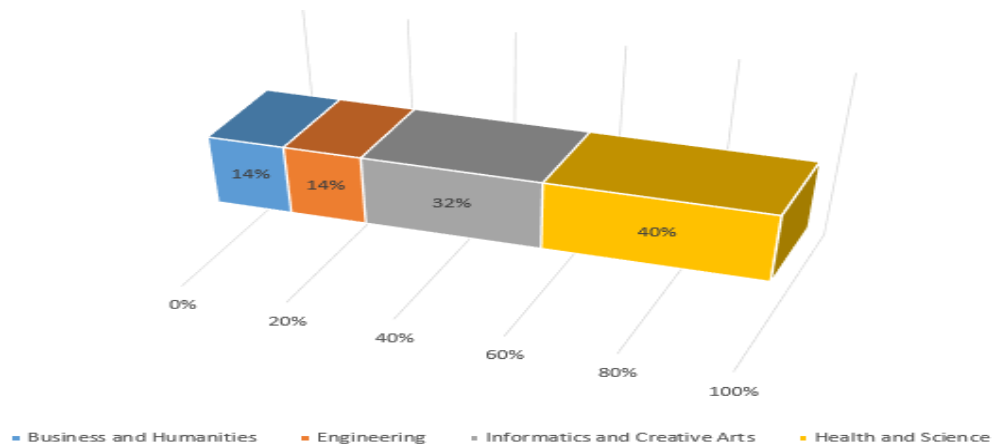
Below is a graphical representation of the geographic mix of our AY23/24 student body showing 70% of our students came from counties other than Louth, with Dublin our second most important source of students. 5% of our students reside in Northern Ireland.

HOME ADDRESS OF OUR P/T STUDENTS



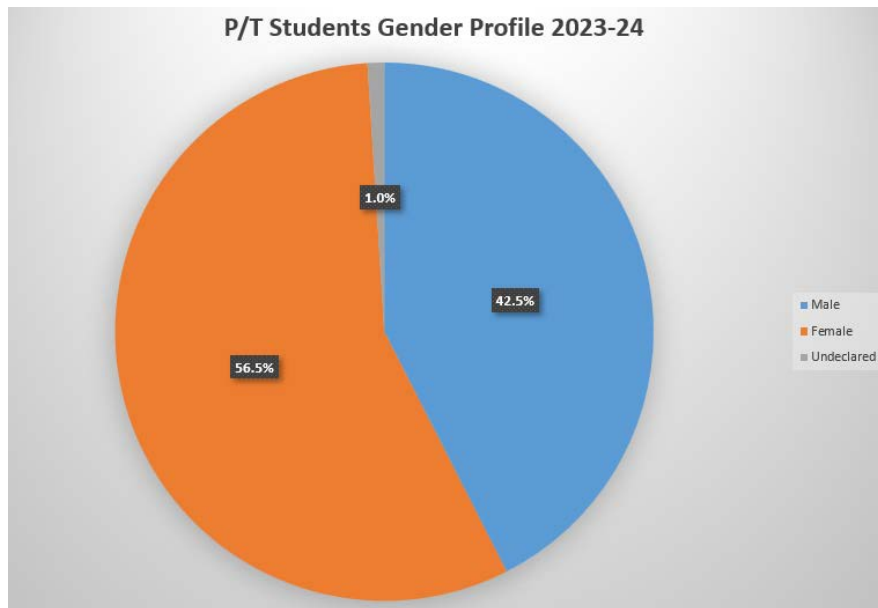
Source: HEA

What are DKIT's part-time students studying?



Source: HEA

Gender participation: The gender participation ratio on AY23/24 part-time certified courses was 42.5% male, 56.5% female, 1% undeclared.



Source: HEA

Springboard+

The Lifelong Learning Office is the coordinating unit for DKIT's Springboard scheme. Springboard is a Government/HEA initiative that seeks to support and encourage the Irish workforce access to higher education in order to upskill or reskill. During AY23/24 the LLC oversaw admissions to the following 9 Springboard programmes:

School of Business and Humanities

- Certificate in Culinary Skills (L6 – 60 credits)
- Certificate in Digital Marketing and Digital Media Design (L7 – 30 credits)

School of Health and Science

- Certificate in Health and Safety for the Manufacturing Industry (L6 - 30 credits)

School of Informatics and Creative Arts

- Certificate in 2D/3D Digital Animation Production (L7 - 40 credits)
- Certificate in Digital Media Design (L7 - 40 credits)
- Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (L8 - 60 credits)
- Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics (L8 - 60 credits)
- MSc in Computer Animation (L9 - 90 credits)
- MSc in Games and Extended Reality (L9 - 90 credits)

Total number of places available = **134**

Total number of applications = **474**

Place offers made = **184**

Total Springboard enrolment = **121 students**

Fill rate = **90%**

New part-time courses introduced for 2023/24

Health and Science

Certificate in Newborn Clinical Examination (Level 9 - 10 credits)

Certificate in Nursing: Recognition and Management of the Deteriorating Adult (L9 - 10 credits)

BSc (Hons) in Agriculture YEAR 4 (Add on L8 - 60 credits)

Certificate in Soils and Digital Agriculture (Level 8 - 10 credits)

Certificate in Sustainable Agricultural Technologies and Energy (Level 8 - 10 credits)

10.School Reports



10.1 School of Business & Humanities

The School of Business and Humanities, led by Dr Patricia Moriarty, continued to support full-time and part-time learners and was delighted to launch eight new Honours Degrees and a Masters in Business Studies in Strategic Data Analytics for Business during this academic year.

The School of Business and Humanities was delighted to collaborate with local Further Education providers to provide pathways for advanced entry into the new suite of Honours Degrees. A meeting (pictured) with providers resulted in articulated pathways which are attracting additional FET graduates to DkIT.



Details of the programmes were shared with regional employers during the School Careers Fair in March 2024, pictured below.



The School continued to develop international links with Marshall University, West Virginia and Caldwell University, New York with visits of representatives from both universities to DkIT in June and May respectively. A DkIT faculty visit is being planned for 2025 to both universities. Some other notable events included the participation of Dr Moriarty as a Panel Member at Killeavy Castle on 15th May, 2023 discussing DkIT's role in the supply of talent to the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor to a visiting group of thirty American FinTech companies.

The School was delighted to host the Annual Dorothy MacArdle lecture on 20th February 2024 with kind sponsorship from Dundalk Credit Union and organised by Dr Fiona Fearon. This year's lecture was delivered by Prof Mary McAuliffe, UCD (pictured).



Some highlights of the year across all four academic departments within the School of Business and Humanities are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Department of Humanities

The academic year 2023-2024 was marked by significant achievements for the Department of Humanities under the management of Dr. Annaleigh Margey. Dr Margey is a partner in 'Ancient Woodlands Ireland' Project, led by Maynooth University, which received 1.2million in funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the National Parks and Wildlife Services to undertake research on the extent of archival and map material that records our woodland heritage.

The BA (Hons) in Sports, Enterprise, and Business students continued their collaboration with local primary schools as part of the Developing Physical Literacy module. Successful completion of this module now includes a Sport Ireland Coaching Children award. In Year 2, students achieve a Coaching Young People award, providing a foundation for their third-year interventions.

Second year students also engaged with St. Brigid's School and National Learning Network gaining valuable hands-on experience by working with students and service users at these local organisations. Additionally, many students enhanced their professional portfolios by completing Disability Inclusion training through Active Disability Ireland.

The BA (Hons) in Arts programme hosted the Annual Dorothy MacArdle Lecture in February 2024 in conjunction with Dundalk Credit Union. The lecture was given by Dr Mary McAuliffe, UCD and titled 'Writing the Women back in? Reflections on Revolutionary Women Histories and the Decade of Centenaries'.

The programme also hosted the Annual Department of Humanities Research Symposium in April 2024. On the theme of 'Intercultural Conversations', papers were delivered on topics including language, literature, history, music, archaeology and cultural studies.

Final year students on the BA in Community Youth Work and BA (Hons) in Youth Work continued the tradition of a visit to the European Parliament in Brussels earlier this year.

Graduates of the BA (Hons) in Social Care are now able to apply for CORU registration to join the Social Care Workers Registration Board register.

The 4th year Social Care students, as part of their module Working with Older People completed a Digital Champions training to support the delivery of digital skills programmes for people over the age of 65. A number of staff members have published work throughout the year. For example, Dr Colletta Dalikeni, Susan Funcheon and Louisa Goss contributed a chapter to the all-new edition of Social Care Work, the leading text for social care work students and social care workers in Ireland.

Department of Hospitality

The Department of Hospitality led by Dr. Kevin Burns continues to be committed to developing strong industry engagement, professional development, and academic excellence through active participation in community, international, and research activities by way of guest speakers, community outreach efforts, international partnerships, research and professional engagement and industry connections. These activities were showcased at the School of Business and Humanities Industry Day on 27th March 2024 pictured below.



By engaging with various stakeholders, the department ensures that students receive enriched learning experiences and exposure to real-world industry practices.

A team of final year students on the BA (Hons) in Hospitality Management and the BA (Hons) in Event Management programmes participated in the IHI Business Management Game in March 2024.

Faculty member Alan McCabe was the WorldSkills Ireland Cookery Chief Expert on the Irish Team at the World Skills in Lyon 2024.

Department of Management and Financial Studies

The Department of Management and Financial Studies led by Shane Hill saw the BA Hons in Accounting and Finance programme attract vibrant student numbers for September 2023 (CAO) which underlines the very strong demand for the BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance programme. The programme has earned superb Exemptions from major Accounting Bodies, ACCA, ACA, and CIMA.

The BB (Hons) programme is one of the most popular undergraduate degrees within the School of Business and Humanities. Graduates are highly sought after within the jobs market. This 3 Year Level 8 award can also afford graduates the opportunity of achieving a Level 9 Master's degree at DkIT, potentially in one further year.

A 2 Plus 2 Linkage with Further Education Colleges in the Region saw 6 Learners from O'Fiaich College plan to commence studies on Advanced Entry basis in Autumn 2024 on the BA Hons in Public Relations and Strategic Communication programme.

Also, Faculty Teams have established very strong industry links, which complements the focus on applied Research Projects, and a full Semester of Work Placement. Students can also complete the equally attractive option of Studies Abroad within one of our Erasmus Partner Colleges.

Department of Business Studies

In February 2024 the Department of Business Studies led by Dr Brian Boyd Henry validated a new MBS in Strategic Data Analytics for Business designed to provide graduates with a set of critical and highly employable skills in Data Analytics, Strategic Management and Leadership meaning they can play a pivotal role in shaping and executing an organisation's data strategy and drive business success through effective and ethical use of data.

In June 2024 the Department ran a two-week Chinese Summer Camp which was funded by Department of Education under Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-26. The camp was a huge success with post-primary school pupils attending from 11 different schools from across the region and organised by Ping Cao and Marie Bouquet.

In December 2023 Year 1 French language students from across the School of Business and Humanities participated in a 5-day intensive Business Project with Business students from IUT Lens in Northern France. The students were involved in a collaborative, team-based activity in organising a Human Resources project. Employing a multi-disciplinary approach, the students had to demonstrate skills in marketing, HR, communication strategies and digital resources. Their lecturer Vicky Leahy organised the experience and accompanied the students for the week.

The School of Business and Humanities was delighted to recently host an event celebrating 21 years of its award-winning Masters - MBS in Entrepreneurship and Marketing Programme in the Department of Business Studies. This course has been fast tracking careers in business and international marketing for over two decades. Originally introduced in 2002 and led by Professor Colette Henry, the first Cohort of 8 students graduated in Oct 2003. Since then, the programme has graduated almost 400 students. This course won an Irish Education Award in 2023, collecting the Best International Collaboration Award. This marked the fourth award for this course since 2018, showcasing the programme's continued success and impact.



10.2 School of Engineering

Programme Development

The following new full-time programmes in the Department of the Built Environment were validated during 2023/24.

- BSc (Honours) in Quantity Surveying
- BSc in Quantity Surveying.

The programmes commenced in September 2024 with a total intake of 37 students.

The School was also working throughout 2023/24 on the development and validation of micro-credentials. The following micro-credentials are currently offered by the School and these were recently re-designated by Academic Council as 5-credit non-major awards.

- Certificate in Building Information Modelling 1 (BIM 1)
- Certificate in AutoCAD
- Certificate in Electric Vehicle 1 and 2
- Certificate in Electrical, Testing and Verification - Qualified Certifier
- Certificate in Heat Pump Installation

The validation of the BEng (Hons) in International Civil Engineering was completed in April 2024. This is a collaborative programme with the Hebei University of Engineering (HUE) in Handan, China. The programme is co-delivered by DkIT and HUE, with the DkIT component being delivered through a combination of remote delivery from DkIT and periodically in China.



Visit by Hebei University of Engineering (June 2024) and John McKeever lecturing in HUE in China

The Programmatic Review process for the School of Engineering was launched in January 2024 and is due for completion in March 2025. During 2023/24, the School carried out an environmental scan (including consultation with stakeholders), developed a 5-year strategy for the School and started the work on reviewing and revising the programmes.

Consortia-led Apprenticeships

The School of Engineering successfully joined the Consortia-led apprenticeship in Manufacturing Engineering in 2023/24. The apprenticeship is led by Ibec with ATU (Galway) as the coordinating provider. DkIT will be a collaborating provider, starting in September 2025. This apprenticeship programme is available at NFQ levels 6, 7 and 8.

Ibec have hosted an information webinar with local and regional manufacturing companies and a further information session will take place on the day of the School of Engineering Annual Careers Fair ('Engineering your Future') on 26th March 2025. The Marketing Team, School's Liaison and the School of Engineering have been actively promoting these programmes to secondary school students and employers.



Representatives from DkIT, Ibec, Johnson and Johnson and ATU at the signing of the consortium agreement and MoU in December 2024

The School continued to engage with the Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland (SCSI) on the development of a new Consortia-led apprenticeship in Building Surveying. A preliminary proposal was submitted to the NAO and following feedback, further engagement with employers took place. The Preliminary Proposal was re-submitted and feedback is pending.

Craft Apprenticeships

In October 2023, the new expansion facility in the Carroll Building was opened and Plumbing and Electrical apprentices moved from temporary accommodation into the new workshops. The facility includes large plumbing and electrical workshops, staff offices, stores and technicians' preparation rooms.

In 2023/24, the School applied through the HEA EOI process for funding to support enabling works and equipment, facilitating the expansion of the plumbing apprenticeship. This was successful and in September 2024, the School increased the enrolment of craft apprenticeship with the admission of 2 additional blocks per term of plumbing apprentices. This brings the total annual intake of craft apprentices to 1152 (72 blocks), which is the highest ever enrolment.

Work began on the planning for the new TSSPF-funded (13.2 million) facility (Centre for Craft Apprenticeship Provision) which will see the refurbishment of the remaining bays in the Carroll Building and the Boiler House, to further increase the intake of craft apprentices up to 96 blocks over the coming 5-6 years. The project includes the decanting of Carpentry and Joinery and Motor Mechanic apprenticeship to the Carroll Building, facilitating the accommodation of Consortia-led apprenticeships and Research in the North and South Buildings.

External Accreditation

Accreditation from the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) was awarded in January 2024 for the following programmes:

- BSc (Hons) in Architectural Technology
- BSc in Architectural Technology

Europe

The final year class of the Bachelor (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering students, together with some of their lecturers, visited the Irish College Leuven, Belgium for an intense three-day programme that took the group to both Leuven and Brussels. The students visited a variety of high-tech design companies, KU Leuven and the European Commission. The School also participated in an Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme in Finland.



(a)



(b)

Mechanical Engineering students with Senior Lecturer Catherine McCloskey, participating in an Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) in North Karelia, Finland, in 2024

Mechanical Engineering students on their annual visit to Leuven in Belgium in 2024.

Four Engineering students participated in Erasmus exchange programs. Two students travelled for a study semester to Avans UAS in the Netherlands and to Heilbronn UAS in Germany. Two additional students did placements abroad through the Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen in Germany. The School is planning to increase its engagement with the Erasmus+ programme and collaborations with European universities.

Schools Outreach

A number of outreach events took place during the year, including a full line-up of events for Engineers Ireland STEPS week in March 2024, followed by the TY STEPS programme in May 2024. The School also ran the HEA-funded Engineering Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation Camps for local secondary schools and a large number of second-level female students (c 500) participated in the DkIT Heart STEM programme which is a collaboration between Engineering, Science and Mathematics. Engineering staff members also carried out a large number of school visits at both primary and secondary level. A School of Engineering Outreach page was developed on the DkIT website in 2023/24 and this facilitates requests and bookings for events.



Over 600 primary school students attended the 'Scientific Sue' roadshow in March 2024 as part of EI STEPS Week

Student Achievements

The Cargotec Prize for 'Best Female Engineering Graduate' (sponsored by local company Cargotec), was presented at Conferring in 2024. The prize winner was Mairead O'Connor Heaney, a part-time student on the BSc (Honours) In Civil Engineering.



The President's Prize for Enterprising Student of the Year 2024 was won for the 9th time by a graduate of the School of Engineering. A mechanical engineering graduate, Aran Ralph, won the prize for his design of a table-mounted cup stabilization device, which incorporated novel tremor suppressive technology, for use by patients with Parkinson's Disease.

Colin McGuinness, a Civil Engineering graduate, was the winner of the Peter Rice Award in May 2024 for his project on the use of carbon fibre reinforced polymer in concrete beams.

The annual award ceremony, which is sponsored by Engineers Ireland Northeast Region, celebrates the renowned Dundalk-raised engineer, Peter Rice who worked for Ove Arup on major global projects such as the Centre Pompidou, Lloyd's of London, the Louvre Pyramid and Sydney Opera House. In 2024, an additional award for level 7 graduates was added to honour local scientist, engineer and STEM communicator Dr. Niamh Shaw. The inaugural Niamh Shaw award was won by Seamus O'Grady for his project on wastewater treatment in Carlingford.



A DkIT student team once again participated in the Chartered Institute of Builders “Tomorrows Leaders” Student Competition which was held in ATU Sligo in February 2024. The DkIT team won the silver medal and DkIT undertook to host the next conference and student competition, which took place in DkIT on 11th February 2025.



DKIT – Silver Medal Winners - CIOB Tomorrows Leaders Student Competition 2024

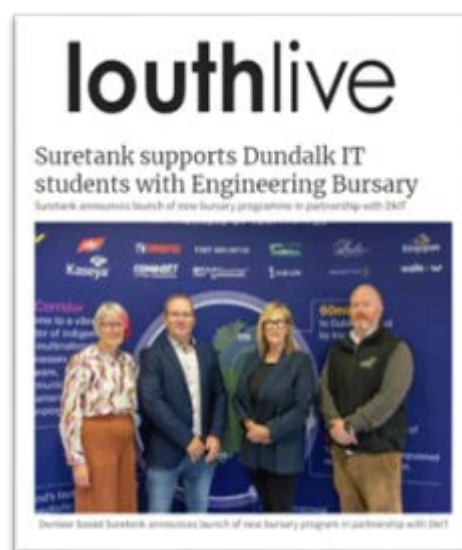
Ben Blakemore, Peter McBride, Tom Minogue, Luke Dowdall with their medals

The following student bursaries were developed in 2023/24, specifically for School of Engineering students, in collaboration with external sponsors.

- Dundalk Credit Union sponsor a female student who has successfully completed stage 1 of an Engineering programme for the remaining three years of that programme. The successful candidate undertakes the role of the Dundalk CU Student Ambassador for Sustainability.
- A local company, Suretank, sponsor a student who has successfully complete the 2nd year of a programme in Electronic or Mechanical Engineering or Architectural Technology for the remaining two years of their programme of study. The successful student is offered work placement and other opportunities with the company.



Grace Marron from Stage 2 Civil Engineering is the Dundalk CU Student Ambassador for Sustainability for 2024/25.



Research

The CREDIT Research Centre achieved research centre designation in November 2023 and has expanded its research capacity and impact. Over this period, the centre consisted of ten postgraduate students, supported by a team of seven academic staff, one post-doctoral researcher, and a research assistant (who joined in March 2024). CREDIT has been actively engaged in high-impact research aligned with national prioritised areas in energy, climate action and sustainability.

The centre has also enhanced its industry engagement through the CREDIT Technology Gateway, facilitating collaborations with SMEs and local communities. Some of the achievements include:

- Leading in an SFI/Research Ireland-funded project, through the Energy Innovation Call.
- Securing capital equipment through the Enterprise Ireland Capital Grant.
- The School of Engineering's first PhD graduate in November 2023.
- Engagement in several IntertradeIreland and Enterprise Ireland funding schemes, directly related to close to market needs and commercialisation, such as Innovation Vouchers and Innovation Boost Project.
- International peer-reviewed journal and conference publications and international conference presentations, for example ECOS 2024.

The CREDIT Research Centre has established a collaborative agreement with the Bryden Centre, strengthening the centre's cross-border research partnerships in renewable energy and sustainability. The key focus of this collaboration is to explore joint research opportunities and secure funding through PEACEPLUS.

Engineering Careers Fair

The School hosted its second Engineering Careers Fair 'Engineering the Future' on 20th March 2024. This was attended by 28 local and regional employers (Cargotec, Combilift, ESB, Mercury, Controlsoft, Elliott group, ABB, Walls, ASEE, Timoney, Atkins, Roco, Bam, Trilan, Anord, WuXi, Omega Surveying Services and both Louth and Meath County Council were among the exhibitors) and hundreds of Engineering students engaged with the event. The School availed of the opportunity to run focus group sessions with employers as part of the programmatic review environmental scanning process.



Athena Swan Accreditation

The School of Engineering submitted an application in June 2022, for the extremely prestigious Bronze Athena Swan accreditation. The Athena SWAN charter is a framework that is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality in higher education and research. Whilst DkIT was previously awarded the Bronze Athena Swan on an Institute level, the School of Engineering are the first to apply for an Athena Swan School specific award.

The Institute received confirmation in January 2024 that the application was successful, and the trophy was awarded at an Athena Swan Ireland ceremony in Trinity College in December 2024. The School continues to work through its Athena Swan Action Plan, focusing on several key priority areas to improve female engagement in the field of Engineering.



Orlagh Devine (SoE), Ciara O'Shea (EDI Officer) and Breda Brennan (Head of SoE) at the Athena Swan Ireland Award Ceremony

10.3 School of Health & Science

Programme Development

The following new programme validations were completed by the School of Health and Science in 2023/2024.

Programme Title	NFQ Level	Award Type	Award Class	ECTS
<i>Master of Science in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation</i>	9	Major	Master's Degree	90
<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60

<i>Certificate in Operations Management and the Production of Innovative and Sustainable Food Products</i>	9	Minor	Certificate	20
<i>Certificate in Compliance and Continuous Improvement in Sustainable Food Manufacturing</i>	9	Minor	Certificate	20
<i>Master of Science in Community Mental Health Nursing</i>	9	Major	Master's Degree	90
<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Community Mental Health Nursing (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60
<i>Certificate in Science in Nursing in Community Mental Health Nursing (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)</i>	9	Minor	Certificate	30
<i>Certificate in Trauma Informed Care</i>	9	Minor	Certificate	10
<i>Certificate in the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</i>	8	Special-Purpose	Certificate	20

The following New Programmes commenced in the School in 2023/2024:

- BSc Hons Nutrition & Health
- BSc Hons Agriculture (Part Time)- add on
- Certificate in Nursing-Recognition and Management of the Deteriorating Adult
- Certificate in Newborn Clinical Examination

External Funding was awarded for a number of Programmes in the School:

- Human Capital Initiative: Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Food Technology & Innovation
- Biopharmaskillsnet: Higher Diploma in Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing

External Accreditation

The following interactions took place with Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs).

- An annual report was submitted to NMBI in relation to undergraduate nursing and midwifery programmes.
- An annual report was submitted to the Veterinary Council of Ireland for the BSc Veterinary Nursing programme.
- An annual report was submitted to IOSH who accredits the Certificate in Health and Safety for the Manufacturing Sector programme.

Selection of Community Engagement Activities

- The challenge of supporting students in the development of their professional practice skills and assistance in the integration of theoretical knowledge to their practice is achieved through the novel and creative development of a Parent and Toddler group in stage 4, semester 1 of the Early Childhood Studies programme each academic year. Providing a unique learning opportunity, this approach requires the student group to set up and run their own service in the form of a parent and toddler group, within the supportive confines of the college campus, where the lecturing staff are always present to guide (and assess) the students in the integration of theory into their practice. It provides an opportunity for students to link learning and plan, carry out, monitor and evaluate a programme of activities for young children while working in collaboration with their parents /carers. Participating families (up to 20 each year, consisting of local parents /carers and their young children) gain insight into the value of working with early years professionals. For parents / carers, the resulting impact on their relationship with their children, their understanding of the value of play and their confidence in engaging in play with their young children is generally very positive. This took place in Sem 1 2023/2024
- The School hosted Scifest in April 2024. There were 140 projects on exhibition and almost 300 second level students in attendance. SciFest is an all-island STEM initiative which fosters active, collaborative and inquiry-based learning among second-level students. The programme operates throughout the school year and, being locally and regionally based and free-to-enter, is highly inclusive and accessible. Winners from each regional STEM fair go on to compete at a National Final in November.



The prize winners are listed below:

Award	Winners Project No, School, Age Category & Student Names
Irish Science Teachers' Association Award (ISTA Student Award)	Bremore Educate Together Does brand recognition change opinion on taste?
ESERO Discover Space Student Award Discover Space Teacher Award	St Marys Diocesan School - Intermediate The Effect of Microgravity on Plants
SciFest Chemistry Student Award	Colaiste Dun An Ri, Student: Has the solution to Irelands energy crisis been on our dinner plates this whole time? An investigation into alternative feed stocks for the production of biodiesel fuel contributing to a cleaner environment
Dawn Meats Agricultural Science Award	Patrician High School CNK Animal Solutions
Regeneron Life Sciences Award	Ardee Community School Junior Enzyme catalase's activity and inhibition when interacting with prescribed and over the counter medicine for various health conditions.
SciFest Maths in Science Award	St. Oliver's Community College Out of this world rollercoasters - A Mathematical Investigation into the factors which influence rollercoaster motion and how these vary on other planets.
Huawei Communications Award	Loreto Secondary School Can we use AI to improve the quality of our homework? Can teachers tell the difference without using an online detector?
Business Excellence Institute Award	St Oliver's Community College

	What are the effects of sleep therapy techniques on quality of sleep?
SciFest Physics Award	Vincent's Secondary School An attempt to create an improved artificial version of the "helicopter seed" produced by the acer pseudoplatanus.
Intel Technology Award	Our Lady's Secondary School The impact of AI on Society
EirGrid Cleaner Climate Award	Colaiste Dun An Ri 'Periods without Plastic'. Why is there a reluctance amongst females to use more sustainable period products such as period pants?
Boston Scientific Medical Devices Award	Patrician High School, Student The NRG-Guard: The modified mouthguard that allows the wearer to install a sport solution into the mouthguard using a slow release mechanism.
SciFest Runner-up Best Project Award	St Josephs Secondary School Balancing Behaviour
SciFest Best Project Award	Patrician High School CNK Animal Solutions

Category – DkIT SciFest 2024 Prizewinners		Winners
Senior	Best Senior Life Sciences Project	Breifne College Smart Mart
	Runner-up Senior Life Sciences Project	St. Josephs Secondary School Attitudes towards invisible disabilities

	Best Senior Physical Science or Technology Project	Patrician High School Correlation between Stress Levels/Blood Pressure doing Well-Being activities like the Sauna
Intermediate	Best Intermediate Life Sciences Project	Our Lady's secondary school How Aed Aware Are We?
	Runner-up Intermediate Life Sciences Project	St. Josephs Secondary School Learning while playing – Gamification of Mathematical Concepts
	Best Intermediate Physical Science or Technology Project	Ardgillan Community College Which Design of Wind Turbine is most efficient?
Junior	Best Junior Physical Sciences or Technology PProject	Beech Hill College Distance Sensor
	Runner-up Physical Sciences or Technology Project	Athboy Community School Solar Panel

- The School continued to update the Science Outreach webpage which was launched in 2022/2023. This interactive web portal provides a one stop shop for Schools to view range of outreach workshops ongoing within the School. <https://www.dkit.ie/p/science-outreach.html> These include primary and secondary school workshops and the option for schools to request a School visit by a member of the academic team.
- In March 2024, the Department of Life and Health Sciences in association with the Virtual Labs project invited DkIT alumni and current students to their “Career Paths in Science” 2024 event. This event consisted of an expert panel that included past graduates, Shauna McCabe - Associate Director Manufacturing Technology at WuXi Biologics, Cathal Duffy - Process Engineer at Intel Corporation, Natasha Markey - Validation Engineer at Almac, along with Kerry Devlin and Orla Sherlock, lecturers in the Department of Life and Health Sciences. The panellists spoke about their current positions and their career journey so far with some very valuable insights for the students into the world of work. Finally, Catherine Staunton, Head of Careers and Employability at DkIT, brought the whole afternoon together by presenting the graduate attributes from the DkIT Graduate Attribute Framework and an overview of the services available to students through the DkIT Careers and Employability service.



- In March 2024 the School hosted ‘Ex-HER-cise’. The Ex-HER-cise @ DkIT initiative for Transition Year girls. aimed to promote and celebrate the involvement of girls in sport and exercise, not only through active participation but through careers in coaching, leadership, officiating and governance which is in line with Sport Ireland's vision for Women in Sport. The guest speakers on campus included Hannah Craig, Women in Sport Manager at Sport Ireland, who spoke to students about the Her Moves initiative aimed at getting teenage girls active. Students then got to discuss some of the challenges facing females in sport with a high-profile panel of people, including Amanda Greensmith – former rugby international and Head of Women’s Development at the IRFU, Laura Donovan – Director of Women’s Football at Drogheda United and UEFA A Licence coach, Julie Duffy – Sports Inclusion and Disability Officer at Louth Local Sports Partnership and Mags Nugent – athlete and athletics coach and former winner of Ireland’s Fittest Family. Some of the topics discussed included how it is never too late to try something new, breaking down barriers for females in coaching and juggling the pressures of

school and sport. This was followed by an afternoon of interactive, action-packed and fun practical sessions showcasing the world of exercise science at DkIT.



- In April 2024, the BSc Hons Health and Physical Activity team hosted an event based around student population's health-related behaviours and well-being called "Are You Well"? This event was inspired by the results of a piece of research that was undertaken by last year's fourth-year students of the BSc (Hons) in Health and Physical Activity degree programme. The aim of this occasion was to present the findings of this research to help students and staff make changes to improve their overall health and well-being. This event was supported by DkIT Healthy Campus Initiative, Healthy Louth, Pobal and the Healthy Ireland fund, Department of Health.
- Dr Aine McHugh, Lecturer & Programme Director of the BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing, commenced a collaboration with Art Therapist Jenny Slater, Creative Spark's Sarah Daly and Gráinne Murphy in collaboration with Louth Meath CAMHS to offer an exciting new creative arts hub 'Áit Eile' for young people living with mental health difficulties. The aim of this collaborative project is to co-produce and develop a new creative arts hub for 13- to 18-year-olds in counties Louth and Meath. The Áit Eile project is funded from Creative Ireland Nurture Fund, an initiative from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. This project will support young people with mental health difficulties attending local CAMHS services and will facilitate the opportunity for them to work with professional artists from a wide variety of sectors to learn new skills and help their overall wellbeing, happiness and sense of belonging in their own communities.

Selection of student achievements

- In November 2023 the inaugural Nursing & Midwifery Career Day took place. The Department of Nursing & Midwifery in conjunction with the DkIT Careers & Employability Centre hosted their first dedicated Careers Day for their Nursing & Midwifery Final Year students. The Day was made up of 4 distinct sessions and commenced with a Careers Workshop delivered by the DkIT Careers & Employability Centre focussing on CVs, LinkedIn and Competency Based Interviews. This was followed by Discipline Specific seminars with employers, recent graduates and research students in the field. Some of the employers who attended on the day included Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Cavan General Hospital, Letterkenny Maternity Unit, Beaumont Hospital, HSE Older Person Services, HSE Disability Services Louth Meath and Cavan Monaghan, HSE Public Health services, St Patrick's Mental Health Services, Louth Meath and Cavan Monaghan Mental Health Services, National Forensic Services, SJOG services, Praxis Care, Talbot Group, St. Michaels House and the Peter McVerry Trust.



- In November 2023, Year 3 General Nursing Students held their Annual Cake Sale fundraising event with all proceeds going to two local charities, North East Cancer Research & Education Trust (NECRET) and the Gary Kelly Cancer Support Centre. These General Nursing students raised over €1288.



- A number of students in the School were made awards under the Elevate scheme for their contribution to engagement activities both within the college and the wider community.



- In October 2023, 4th year students presented at the prestigious SURE Network Conference SURE2023 which was held in TU Dublin in October. The SURE 2023 Conference was the sixth in the series of Science Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) Conferences. 57 Students from throughout Ireland who completed their Final Year Project in a science discipline in 2022-23 presented their undergraduate research work at this event as either an oral or poster presentation. Over 300 people were in attendance on the day including some staff and students from DkIT. The SURE Network aims to enhance practice through dissemination of best practice, and implementation of workshops, conferences and an undergraduate journal. The SURE Network is a disciplinary network and member of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.



Selection of School Projects

- Dr. Orla Sherlock from the School of Health and Science Dundalk participated in the 'DkIT Loves STEM' in partnership with iWish. This roadshow facilitated talks to female TY students in the region which included visits to Loreto Balbriggan, St Vincents Dundalk, Breifne College Cavan, Scoil Uí Mhuirí Dunleer and Our Lady's College, Greenhills Drogheda.



- Dr Orla Sherlock and Dr Chiara Hanl hosted Ardee Community College and Breifne College, Cavan at the newly combined Germ Lab & Pharma Lab one day workshops on Campus in the Spring of 2024. These two workshops combined both biology and chemistry labs for Leaving cert students. These activities were funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Society of Microbiology. The secondary school students also got to experience a fun day in the life of third level students and were given the opportunity to directly interact and ask questions of the current undergraduate students.



- The School is a partner in an innovative project that will use virtual laboratories as a teaching tool for the experimental sciences. The School works alongside academics in the chemical sciences sphere at Maynooth University (project lead), Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin City University and University College Cork. This ambitious and timely project develops innovative approaches to teaching students aspects of experimental sciences using virtual

laboratories. Check out this video for an introduction to the project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hj9SJh5q9Rw>. The five partnering institutions are working with education technology providers to develop courses in which a real laboratory experience is complemented with a virtual laboratory experience, through a blended approach. The project gives students the opportunity to experience a real-work environment through virtual training and engagement with enterprise partners, and to help reinforce practical techniques and concepts, as well as management and project work. More information on the project can be found on the HCI project website at Maynooth University (lead Institute): <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/mu/chemistry/virtual-labs-hci-p3-initiative>.

The DkIT Virtual Laborator team organised a Careers Enterprise workshop and a Science Careers event for students in early 2024.



- In May 2024 the DkIT team were part of a team that received a prestigious HEA and National Forum award for Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) as part of their collaboration on the Human Capital Initiative funded Virtual Labs project. This award follows recent success at the 2024 Education Awards, where the consortium was recognised as the 'Best Collaboration Project'. Dr Ronan Bree and Dr Bernard Drumm, both from the School of Health & Science, represented DkIT and the wider project team on the DELTA panel evaluation and both collected the awards along with members from across the consortium.



- The RiVeR Project (DkIT responding to the impacts of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence: multi-agency education, research and training initiatives) funded under the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Performance Funding scheme, receiving total funding of €833,333 commenced in March 2023 and will run for a three-year period. The RiVeR Project is an ambitious project which is targeted towards broadening the availability and opportunities for education, research and training to cohorts that are most in need of further support and education in the areas of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV). DkIT in partnership with key stakeholders, aims to incorporate systematic continuous research and evaluation into the RiVeR project and to build a community of practice at national level. This initiative will also drive discussion and debate to inform national policy. In addition, the project intends to develop educational resources for higher education institutions to raise awareness and build further capacity in this field. The RiVeR Project Steering Committee consists of members with expertise in the area of DSGBV including a Domestic Violence activist, representatives from Barnardos, Women's Aid Dundalk, Safe Ireland, An Garda Síochána, Drogheda Women's & Children's Refuge, Ulster University, Men's Aid Ireland, The Department of Justice, Coxs Demesne Youth and Community Project Dundalk, Health Service Executive, University of Galway and Louth Children and Young People's Services Committees.



- On the 29th January 2025 the inaugural RiVeR Project Community of Practice event was hosted on campus. This offered attendees keynote addresses from Professor John Devaney, Centenary Professor of Social Work and Dean of the School of Social and Political Science and an address by Mary McDermott, CEO of Safe Ireland. The event was attended by over 100 participants from a wide range of stakeholder organisations from across Ireland with the aim of maximising support and building a community of practice for those who currently work in this area. The keynote addresses were followed by an interactive workshop to ascertain stakeholder education and training needs in the area of sexual and gender-based violence. The RiVeR Project team also took this opportunity to officially launch their new website and were joined virtually by Minister for Justice Helen McEntee via a recorded video message which was shown on the day to all attendees.



- In March 2024 the RiVeR Project in Dundalk Institute of Technology hosted a lunchtime event on campus showcasing the Seeking Safety Ireland initiative. The RiVeR Project is a national programme which is responding to the impacts of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence through research, education and training. The event was opened by Dr Kathleen Nallen Project Lead for the RiVeR Project who was followed by Orla Walsh the Seeking Safety Ireland Coordinator. Orla introduced the audience to the Seeking Safety Pilot Project which is an evidence based therapeutic programme designed to support women who are experiencing difficulties resulting from substance misuse, trauma/or mental health issues and domestic sexual or gender-based violence. This national pilot programme commenced in October 2022, and is currently being funded by the HSE, with the support of the Department of Health, Women's Mental Health Task Force. The project is run in partnership between the HSE and seven community projects: The SAOL project, Ballyfermot Star, Reddoor Project Drogheda, Ballymun Star, Roscommon women's network, Sophia Housing and Ruhama. Orla was eloquently supported on the day by peer workers and service users who described their own personal journey and experience of the programme.

- The School participated in a range of Teaching and Learning enhancement projects. Staff in the School were awarded 6/10 DkIT NTTORR projects.
- In April 2024 a new partnership with WuXi Biologics and WuXi Vaccines was announced by the School. This new bursary programme will provide two female 3rd year science students at DkIT with €1,500 financial support as they progress through their degree. This bursary provided by WuXi Biologics and WuXi Vaccines is part of the company's Women in STEM (WiSTEM) initiative that bolsters the organisation's dedication to empower and encourage more females to increase their representation and realise their potential in the fields of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The recipients of the 2024 bursary are Anya Benjamin a 3rd year student from BSc in Bioscience and Eubamweofe Laura Benedo a 3rd year in BSc in Pharmaceutical Science. The students were tasked with an assignment themed "If we assume we've arrived: we stop searching, we stop developing", a quote from the globally renowned Professor Jocelyn Bell Burnell who recently opened the Institute's new state of the art Science Building which was named in her honour.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food & Animal Health ran its Annual Careers Information Session where graduates of the Department outlined the range of career pathways that they followed. It was hosted online and current students and staff from the Department participated.



- Dr Sinéad Loughran from the Department of Life & Health Sciences co-edited a book on Protein Chromatography which is part of the prestigious Methods in Molecular Biology Series recently published by Springer Science. Dr Loughran co-edited this with Dr John Milne at the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training, which is a global centre of excellence for training and research in bioprocessing, this institute was established to support the rapidly growing biopharmaceutical industry. This book was an international project with

contributors from a diverse range of nations, including Ireland, the United States, Canada, Portugal, Switzerland, and China, among others. Dr. Sinéad Loughran authored 4 of the chapters while other authors within Ireland who are affiliated with a variety of higher education institutions, include another DkIT academic, Dr Ronan Bree, Trinity College Dublin, Atlantic Technological University, Dublin City University and Technological University Dublin which showcases a diverse range of academic institutions nationally. The first edition (2011) of this book ranked in the top 20% of all Springer Science volumes with over 476,000 article downloads while the second edition published in 2017, has to date 207,000 downloads. This third edition incorporates the latest advancements and techniques in protein chromatography, making it an indispensable resource in protein research. The chapters cover various aspects of protein purification, including a range of techniques and approaches in protein extraction and purification as well as downstream processing issues, protein stability and quantitation, and the application of these techniques in areas such as clinical proteomics, gene therapy and immunoprecipitation. The editors have assembled contributions from experienced scientists who have hands-on expertise in the field of protein chromatography with particular emphasis on the production of clearly presented step-by-step methodologies, tips and associated explanatory notes, as well as providing an overview of emerging areas in the field.



- The H2O Heroes initiative was awarded almost €60k towards promoting their environmental education programme in primary schools by Science Foundation Ireland. The H2O Heroes programme at DkIT is co-ordinated by Dr Caroline Gilleran Stephens and Dr Suzanne Linnane from the Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies. The initiative is an action-orientated education package designed for 4th, 5th and 6th class primary school children which is aimed at introducing and exploring key components of the science behind our water resources. The goal of the Institute's H2O Heroes programme is to inspire, inform and engage and this enables children to become real life H2O Heroes and ambassadors for the protection of our most valuable resource, water (H2O), as well as recognise the value of science in their

everyday lives. The funding will not only help the H2O Heroes team spread their workshops into primary schools, but it also helps them to train up teachers of 4th-6th class pupils, and send their 'lab in a box' packs out to primary schools across the North-East.



- Dr. Bridget Kelly from the Dept of Life and Health Sciences in collaboration with Dr. Daithi Kearney from the School of Informatics and Creative Arts were awarded an Irish Research Centre (IRC) New Foundations Funding to work on a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) inspired project with community groups and Íontas Arts Centre in Castleblayney. In this project they worked with community groups and Íontas Arts Centre in Castleblayney to create a science opera.



- In Feb over 30 local TY students came on campus for a taster event in the Department of Nursing Midwifery and Early Years. This occasion allowed TY students the opportunity to experience activities and meet lecturers and students from each discipline in the Department. On the day of the event TY students were introduced to the different disciplines of nursing on offer in the Institute which include General Nursing, Intellectual Disability nursing, Mental Health nursing and Midwifery along with a full overview of their Early Childhood Studies Course.



- In May 2024 the Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies (CFES) led by Dr Suzanne Linnane and Dr Caroline Gilleran Stephens and in association with the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO) hosted a one-day conference on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) on campus. This occasion was attended by Minister Malcom Noonan, T.D. Minister of State for Nature, Heritage & Electoral reform who took this opportunity to launch Ireland's Nature-based Solutions Implementation Strategy.



Master of Ceremonies on the day was Dr Fran Igoe, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) who chaired themes such as Urban, Rural, Youth, Riverine and Coastal which was followed by an in depth panel discussion on policy and next steps. The guests were treated to a very special presentation from students from St. Vincents Secondary School, Dundalk who presented their project on Implementing Nature-based Solutions on school grounds through science-based exploration. This event was a held following on from a 3-day Interreg NWE funded ResiRiver Home | ResiRiver (nweurope.eu) partner meeting which was also held in DkIT. The event drew together international and Irish experts to share their experiences and visions for the upscaling and mainstreaming of Nature-based Solutions.

School Research Activities

Significant research activity continued in the School in 2023/2024. This included the hosting of the School Research Day in May 2024, the detailed programme is included below.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH & SCIENCE ANNUAL RESEARCH DAY

23rd April 2024 - M128 Muirhevna Building

9.00 a.m.	Welcome and Introductions- Dr. Edel Healy		
9.10 a.m.	SESSION 1: Oral Presentations 1-3 & Lightening Talks		Chair: Dr. Suzanne Linnane
Oral Presentations No. 1-3			
9.10 a.m.	Oral Presentation No. 1: Remember Roger Adjei, Réamonn Fealy, Siobhán Jordan, Deirdre Doyle, Joseph P. Lynch <i>CFES, Rural Economy & Development Programme</i> Comparing the Performance of Parsimonious Spring Barley Yield Potential Model and APSIM in predicting the yield of Spring Barley in Ireland		
9.20 a.m.	Oral Presentation No.2: Sarah Tighe, Julie Doyle, Séamus Harvey <i>NetwellCASALA</i> Co-Design of a Data Summary Feature with Older Adults as part of a Digital Health Platform to Support Multimorbidity Self-Management		
9.30 a.m.	Oral Presentation No.3: Sai Neeraj Palakurthy, Zainab R Baig, Srikanth Dudem, Kaneez E Rabab, Gerard P. Sergeant, Keith D. Thornbury, Mark A. Hollywood <i>Smooth Muscle Research Centre</i> Effect of mutating hydrophobic residues in the BK channel pore on LINGO1-induced inactivation		
9.40 a.m.	Q & A		
10.00am -11.00am. Lightening Talks			
1	Moira Maguire and Ann Everitt Reynolds	Dept. NMEY	Commuting to College: The perspectives of Nursing students
2	Muhammad Faisal Jamil, Tadaharu Ueda, Tim McCormac	Electrochemistry Research Group, Department of Marine Resources Science, Faculty of Agriculture and Marine Science, Kochi University, Monobe-Otsu 200, Nankoku 783-8502, Japan.	An electrochemical study of [PV2Mo10O40]5- doped PEDOT film and its potential as an electrocatalyst towards bromate sensing

3	Alexandru Mircea, Bernard T. Drumm, Gerard P. Sergeant, Mark A. Hollywood, Keith D. Thornbury and Caoimhin S. Griffin	SMRC	Identification of Store Operate Ca ²⁺ Entry Mechanism in murine detrusor smooth muscle
4	Samuel Perpétuo ¹ , Dr. Caroline Gilleran Stephens ¹ , Dr. Suzanne Linnan	CFES	Pioneering Environmental Education: Pilot Study of the AqualInverts App for Primary School Children as Citizen Scientist
5	Ryan Callan, Siobhan N. Jordan, Simone McCabe, Edward O’Riordan, Paul Crosson, Joseph P. Lynch	CFES	Investigating the effects of wilting factors on the ensilage dynamics of multispecies swards
6	Lane Galvin, Dr. Anita Byrne, Dr. Kevin McKenna	Dept. NMEY	A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of Trauma-Informed Approach to care (TIAC) Knowledge and Practices in Midwifery Settings in Ireland: Preliminary Phase 1 Quantitative Findings
7	Oonagh M. Giggins, Suzanne Smith, Leen Broeckx, Romy Sels, Kim Helsen, Kris Cuppens.	NetwellCASALA, LiCalab Living & Care Lab, Thomas More, University of Applied Sciences, Centre of Expertise Care and Well-being, Campus Geel, Kleinhoefstraat 4, 2440 Geel, Belgium, Mobilab & Care, Thomas More, University of Applied Sciences, Centre of Expertise Care and Well-being, Campus Geel, Kleinhoefstraat 4, 2440 Geel, Belgium	The Relationship between Physical Activity and Quality Of Life in Midlife Women: A Cross-Sectional Study
8	Orla Moran, Julie Doyle, Oonagh Giggins, Louise McHugh, Evelyn Gould, Gordon Boyle	NetwellCASALA, School of Psychology, University College Dublin, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA	Examining the efficacy of a digital ACT intervention for the improvement of self-management behaviors and psychological flexibility in adults with cardiac disease: A single case experimental design and qualitative investigation
9	Sarpong Hammond Antwi, Suzanne Linnane, Caroline Gilleran Stephens	CFES	Charting a new approach to Public Participation in water management: Lessons from research and practice

10	Bridget Kelly	Dept. LHS	Using Photovoice to engage students in a non-major microbiology course
11	Bernie Pentony	Dept. NMEY	The Immeasurable Gains of Intergenerational Learning”- An Exploratory Study of Educators’ Experiences of an Intergenerational Learning Intervention in an Early Childhood Education Service.
12	Kaneez e Rabab, Srikanth Dudem, Pei Xin Boon, Yaly Alkawadri, Sai Neeraj Palakurthy, Zainab Baig, Gerard Sergeant, Keith Thornbury & Mark Hollywood	Smooth Muscle Research Centre	LINGO Proteins and Parkinsonian tremor
13	Zainab R Baig, Kaneez E Rabab, Sai Neeraj Palakurthy, Gerard P Sergeant, Keith D Thornbury, & Mark A Hollywood	Smooth Muscle Research Centre	Molecular determinants underlying the shift in activation V1/2 by LINGO2 subunits.
14	Prabhadini Godage, Oonagh Giggins, Julie Doyle, Anita Byrne	NetwellCASALA, Dept. NMEY	Evaluating the Efficacy and Impact of Digital Health-Based Mindfulness Intervention on Psychological Wellbeing and Glycaemic Control in Gestational Diabetes
15	Paula Walshe	Dept LHS	Facilitating the Integration of STEAM in Early Childhood Education Pedagogical Practice
16	Neha Gupta, Salah A. Baker, Kenton M. Sanders, Caoimhin S. Griffin, Gerard P. Sergeant, Mark A. Hollywood, Keith D. Thornbury, & Bernard T. Drumm	Smooth Muscle Research Centre, Department of Physiology & Cell Biology, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, Reno, Nevada, U.S.A	Interstitial cell of Cajal-like cells (ICC-LC) exhibit dynamic spontaneous activity but are not functionally innervated in mouse urethra
17	Suzanne Smith, Leen Broeckx, An Jacobs	NetwellCASALA, LiCalab, Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Belgium, SMIT, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium	Digital health bother and burden in older age: a creative play exploration
18	Dr. Kathleen Nallen, Lisa Marmion	RiVeR Project	A mixed methods evaluation of an accredited multidisciplinary Certificate in the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic Abuse

			(FURDA) programme and evaluation of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) stakeholder education and training needs.
19	Sean Kilroy, Sinead O'Connor, Fiona Hackett, Noeleen Gregory	BSc (Hons) Health & Physical Activity Students	Are you well? An investigation into the health-related behaviours and wellbeing of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) students: A pilot study.
20	Srijit Ghosh ¹ , Tuleen Alkawadri ¹ , Keith D Thornbury ¹ , Mark A Hollywood ¹ , Gerard P Sergeant	Smooth Muscle Research Centre	Mechanisms underlying potentiation of nerve-evoked contractions of airway smooth muscle by activation of postjunctional M2 muscarinic receptors
11.00 a.m. Poster Viewing and Coffee Break			
11.30am	SESSION 2: Guest Presentation		Chair: Ms Paula Walshe
Dr. Lucy Whiston, Research Fellow, Programme Manager, PPI Ignite Network at DCU https://ppinetwork.ie/about-us/lead-sites/dcu/			
12.00 pm.	SESSION 3: Oral Presentations No. 4 -6		Chair: Prof Keith Thornbury
12.00 p.m.	Oral Presentation No. 4: Dr Deirdre O'Malley, Prof Deirdre Daly Dept NMEY Factors that influence satisfaction with intimate relationships twelve months after the birth of the first baby		
12.10 p.m.	Oral Presentation No.5: Ricardo Paíz, R. Quinn Thomas ^{b,c,d} , Cayelan C. Carey ^{b,d} , Elvira de Eytoe, Austin Delany ^{b,d} , Russell Poolee, Pat Nixone, Mary Dillanee, Ian D. Jones ^f , Donald C. Piersong, Valerie McCarthy ^h , Suzanne Linnanea, Eleanor Jennings <i>CFES, Department of Biological Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA, Center for Ecosystem Forecasting, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA, Newport Research Facility, Fisheries & Ecosystem Advisory Services, Marine Institute, F28 PF65 Newport, Co. Mayo, Ireland, fBiological and</i>		

	<i>Environmental Science, University of Stirling, Stirling, UK, gDepartment of Ecology and Genetics – Limnology, Uppsala University, 75236 Uppsala, Sweden, School of History and Geography, Dublin City University, D09 V209, Dublin, Ireland</i> Near-term lake water temperature forecasts can be used to anticipate the ecological dynamics of freshwater species
12.20	Oral Presentation No.6: Mitchell Mercer, Gerard P. Sergeant, Mark A. Hollywood, Keith D. Thornbury <i>Smooth Muscle Research Centre</i> Role of KCNQ-encoded voltage-gated potassium (Kv7) channels in erectile function
12.40 p.m.	Q and A
12.50 p.m.	Networking Lunch
1.30 p.m.	Prizewinners Announced

Opening of the STEM Extension

On 16th November 2024 the new STEM extension was opened in the School of Health and Science. This new state of the art facility was named after the inspirational Northern Irish woman, Professor Jocelyn Bell Burnell who was born in Lurgan, Northern Ireland. Professor Bell Burnell is an astrophysicist who, as a postgraduate student in Cambridge University, discovered the first radio pulsars in 1967. This discovery eventually earned the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1974. Earlier in the year DkIT asked staff to nominate names for the new Science building. It was decided to call the building in honour of Professor Jocelyn Bell Burnell, due to her commitment to excellence in science and her belief in providing accessible education.

The opening of the Jocelyn Bell Burnell Building was attended by Professor Bell Burnell along with Simon Harris T.D., Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Professor Bell Burnell as well as delivering an inspirational key note address met with staff and students of the School.



10.4 School of Informatics & Creative Arts

A total of 289 students graduated from the School of Informatics and Creative Arts graduated in 2024. This includes 2 students graduating with postgraduate research degree awards.

Programme Development

A number of new programmes and were successfully validated, including:

- MSc in Computing in Digital Health Innovation
- BA and BA (Hons) Music and Performance Technologies
- BA and BA (Hons) Sound Design
- BA and BA (Hons) Audio Development
- Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Applied Data Science
- Postgraduate Certificate in Data Analytics with Python
- Postgraduate Certificate in Data Analytics and Visualisations
- Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Artificial Intelligence
- BSc. (Hons) in Computing in Computing Systems and Operations (add-on)

Community/Industry Engagement



- To celebrate Maths Week 2023, the Department of Computing Science and Mathematics (DCSM) and Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing (DVHCC) Staff and Students organised a number of onsite activities: from daily lunch-time puzzles to Guest lectures and Movie nights organised by the new Google Developer Student Club. In addition to onsite maths activities, Maths and Engineering lecturers, together with invited speakers visited over 15 primary and secondary schools in the region, held in the Marshes, Dundalk.




Pre-Christmas
Free Leaving Cert
Maths Workshops


The Workshops are available every Wednesday afternoon from **16.15p.m. - 18.15p.m.**, starting on the **25th of October**. All the sessions will take place in the **PJ Carroll's building, Room P1056**.

Maths Lecturers from DkIT will provide these workshops and the sessions are suitable for both Higher and Ordinary level 6th year maths students.

The schedule for these sessions is as following:

- 25th of October: Probability
- 8th of November: Algebra 1
- 15th of November: Algebra 2
- 22nd of November: Functions, Graphs
- 29th of November: Coordinate Geometry
- 6th of December: Differentiation
- 13th of December: Trigonometry

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- DCSM lecturing staff launched the Maths Leaving Certificate Revision Workshops 2023, on a variety of topics, across the Ordinary and Higher-level Mathematics syllabus. These were free sessions aimed at supporting 6th year students preparing for exams.



- Mr Peter Gosling (DCSM), assisted by staff and students from across the school encouraged kids and teens to explore technology in an informal, creative, safe and social environment, through monthly CoderDojo events.
- ◆ DojoMór 2023 took place on Saturday 21st October 2023 in the Carroll's building in DkIT. DojoMór 2023 attracted over 75 youths (56% Boys, 44% girls) who took part in over 200 workshop sessions to the free Computer Coding event.



- One of our first-year students in BSc. (Hons) in Computing Systems and Operations created the video for *micro:bit with python* for use nationally.
- DCSM and DVHCC staff and Students were joined by members of the Maths Week Ireland team in the Garden area of the Carroll's Building to provide puzzles, tricks, balloons and bubbles, keeping both parents and kids engaged with mind-bending maths problems.



- The Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (DCAMM) launched their residency programme with An Táin Arts Centre in September 2023. This offers opportunities to graduating students from our BA Theatre and Film Practice and BA (Hons) Drama and Performance programmes as they received mentorship from staff at An Táin.
- DCAMM partnered with the Louth Film Festival in September 2023 and hosted a full day of screenings in our Screening Room as part of the festival.
- Dr Kieran Nolan (DCAMM) held a sold-out creative coding workshop for the Beta Art and Technology festival in Dublin titled 'Introduction to Creating Interactive Visuals with p5.js' on 4th November 2023.
- Students on BA Theatre and Film Practice performed Bernard Farrell's '*I do not like thee Dr Fell*' in the MacAnna Theatre in November 2023.



- An Táin Arts Centre's Chalk on the Walk Company in Residence (Year 3 Theatre and Film Practice and Year 4 Drama and Performance students) produced *Terminus* in November 2023, and '*King Lear*' in February 2024.
- DCAMM staff, students and graduates were part of the production '*Brigid, Lady of Light*' staged at An Táin Arts Centre and commissioned by Louth County Council as part of the Brigid1500 celebrations in February 2024. Dr Adèle Commins and Dr Daithí Kearney were members of the creative team who developed the concept and were the composers for the production.
- DCAMM music graduates featured prominently in the Oriel Centre / Comhaltas 'Aistear 2030' Series which took place in February/March 2024.
- A workshop was held on the 15th April 2024, with opera composer Michael Gallen and hosted by Íontas Theatre and Arts Centre, with students from secondary schools in Carrickmacross and researchers from the Creative Arts Research Centre (CARC).

- Researchers from the Regulated Software Research Centre (RSRC), presented at the Pint of Science festival in Kennedys, Dundalk on 13-15th May 2024.
- Student work from BA (Hons) Creative Media was exhibited in the square in Dundalk for St Patrick's day 2024.
- DCAMM's Music Showcase took place on 21st March 2024 to a packed audience in Fr McNally Recital Room, featuring students on BA Musical Theatre and BA (Hons) Music.



- Students from BA Theatre and Film Practice performed *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* (2 matinee and 2 evening performances) in the MacAnna Theatre from 16-18th April 2024. We were delighted to host students from local secondary schools.
- DCAMM's Performance exhibition *Echoes of Self* by Year 4 BA (Hons) Drama and Performance students, took place in An Táin Arts Centre, Dundalk, 15th May 2024.
- DCAMM's Film Showcase, presented films from 3rd and 4th year students from the BA (Hons) Film & TV Production at the IMC Cinema, Dundalk on 16th May 2024.
- DCAMM's Music showcase in Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda featuring students on BA Musical Theatre, BA (Hons) Audio and Music Production and BA (Hons) Music, took place on 17th May 2024.



- DCAMM's Fis, which is a showcase of work completed by students on BA Creative Media and BA (Hons) Creative Media was held in June 2024.



- The DkIT Orchestra in residence, The Oriel Traditional Orchestra performed a fundraising concert in Redemptorist Church, Dundalk in November 2023, partnering with other performing groups in the region. They also performed at a special concert to celebrate Nollaig na mBan in the Garage Theatre, Monaghan and at an event to mark the departure of the St Louis nuns from Dundalk in January 2024.
- Regulated Software Research Centre researchers were invited to present at a number of industry engagement workshops including: 'AI on the Edge' hosted by Insight in UCD on September 30th 2023; 'AI in Healthcare – Training Programme' hosted by the Connected Health Cluster in DkIT on Friday September 30th 2023.

- Forty-four of DKIT's Software Development and Games Development students, from the Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing (DVHCC), were placed in industry for semester 2 of academic year. Four students went on an Erasmus course of study. Local companies were again excellent supporters of the placement process. Students were placed with Workeye (5), Black and White Technologies (3), Kayesa (3), Measuresoft (2), ABB (2), Seapark Consulting in Carlingford (2), Mersus (Athlone) (3), Aphix Drogheda (2), Ericsson (Athlone) (2), and one student each with Controlsoft, Digital Systems, Verizon, Cullen Autoparts, O'Fiaich College, Fundy Media, Melissa Curry Design, Redifly, Monaghan Institute, Willis Towers Watson (Dublin), Effector (Dublin), Amazon Web Services (Dublin), SEYFOR (Czech Republic), Aplazo (Mexico), CyberPiper (Luxembourg), Velvet Flare (Luxembourg).
- On 25th April 2024, CARC hosted a hugely successful symposium on sustainability across the arts, heritage and tourism involving researchers from the Institute and stakeholders from across the region and national policy makers.
- Dr Daithí Kearney (DCAMM), moderated a Shared Island panel on the future of Irish culture as part of the Annual Congress of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, held in the Clayton Hotel, Sligo on 4th May 2024.
- DCAMM are proud of their long-established links with the Film and Television Industry. During both semesters of 23/24, students on the BA (Hons) in Film & Television Production were exposed to a wealth of industry expertise as part of the delivery of modules across the course.



- DVHCC hosted the first inaugural Girls in Immersive Technology (GiIT) Camp in April 2024. Female second level students from across the region were invited to DkIT to participate in this camp which gave them an opportunity to develop and engage with immersive technologies.
- As part of a developing partnership, DkIT hosted groups from Hilltown, Newry, Ardee and Dunleer as well as the Dundalk Youth Centre for a film screening as a pilot project. Current students are undertaking recording projects in Dundalk Youth Centre and have been part of their Emergence series of gigs in The Spirit Store and they participated as part of an Open Mic in DkIT.
- HEA ICT Camps funding was secured by the three ICA department to run ICT camps allowed for delivery of a number of very successful Technology related camps, largely over the summer 2024:

- ◆ Exploring ICT
- ◆ Go Create
- ◆ Girls in Immersive Tech
- ◆ TY Week Camps (May & Halloween)
- ◆ Co-ordinated by the ITLC manager, Mr Niall Dowd the camps facilitated over 220 students – with an additional 40 students registered for our Halloween TY week Camp – exploring technologies and areas, from Programming and Web, Networking and Data Science to Games, Animation and Immersive Technologies.



Student Successes

- There were multiple successes within the area of Film & TV Production:
 - ◆ Four films from last year's 3rd year Film Project module were selected for screening at Droichead Arts Centre as part of their Autumn Film Club.
 - ◆ One of these films *Who's Next*, was selected for the Hercules Independent Film Festival, won Best Student Film at the London Independent Film Awards and was a semi-finalist in the Playback International Film Festival.
 - ◆ Another of these films *One Moment*, was selected for the Meath Film Festival, the prestigious Cinematography and Photography Awards London, and semi-finalist at the Los Angeles Cinematography AWARDS (LACA).
 - ◆ Three films: *One Moment*, *Green Boy* and *Books and Binders*, created by Year 3 students on BA (Hons) Film and Television Production were selected for the First Frame at the Dublin International Film Festival 2024.

- *Walking the Labyrinth*, a documentary made by a group of 4th year Film & TV students on their Major Project module (in 22/23) was shortlisted as the only Irish entry to compete in the overall Royal Television Society Awards in London on June 21st. Although all the winning entries from the Republic of Ireland awards were sent forward to the judging panel in the UK, representing IADT, TUD, Ballyfermot and DKIT, the only Irish film chosen to compete was *Walking the Labyrinth*, which then went on to win the overall Long Form Factual Category at the RTS Student Television Awards 2024, sponsored by 4Skills, at the prestigious awards ceremony at the IET, Savoy Place, London on the Friday 21st June. The ROI section of the RTS organised an event in the RTE Studios on 15th October where Director Jessica Doherty screened and discussed the film. Following the screening, commissioning editors from Ireland's major broadcasters offered advice on how to pitch projects to them.



- Graduate Jojo Blake (from Film & TV programme last year) won an award for the Best LGBT Screenplay at the Cinematography and Photography Awards in May.
- Graduate Shona Kelly, won a competition to go to the Festival de Cannes for 3 days in May 2024.
- Short drama *My Life with Brian* (4th year Film & TV last year) was officially selected for the Lift-Off Global Network Festival in June 2024 along with in the Best Student Film category at the 15th Underground Cinema Film Festival in July, while Spook Screen included the short film during its fun festival from December 6-8 2023, in Cork.
- Graduating student Gavin Gribben (BA Hons Music) has won many awards as a Country Music star. He featured on the TG4 series *Opry le Daniel* with Daniel O'Donnell (22 October) and international tours include performing for Beat in the Heat and Starts on the Costa in Spain this year.

- Graduating students Rhíona McPhelim and Jessica Muldrew (BA Hons Music) performed at Speyfest, an international Celtic music festival in Scotland in summer 2024. Rhíona's new start-up, Cobra Promotions, has been selected as the PR company for the international industry event 'Your Roots are Showing'. Jessica was one of the lead performers in the 2024 theatre production Brigid, Lady of Light, commissioned by Louth County Council and staged at An Táin Arts Centre as part of the Brigid1500 celebrations.
- BSc (Hons) Games students, from the Department of Visual and Human Centred Computing (DVHCC) presented a research paper at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in St Mary's College Oxford, 4th November 2023.



- DCAMM student and Animation Director Michelle Kiely received a prestigious invitation from Animation Ireland to attend The Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film (ITFS) as their guest in February 2024.
- DBA (Hons) Creative Media graduate Aoife Hamilton was honored for her design work for the safe disposal of IED devices by the United Nations Department of Peace Operations in a ceremony hosted at the United Nations Curragh Camp.
- Jessica Muldrew, Year 4, BA (Hons) Music, appointed Michael Van Dessel Choral Conducting Scholar for 2023-2024.
- The Google Developers Student club ran two major events in November, taking a bus load of students to Google Headquarters in Dublin and hosting DkIT's first Google Dev Fest with speakers from Google including a DkIT graduate Mr Martin Mullen, Site Reliability Engineering Manager at Google, and a talk by Mr Abhishek Mandal, lecturer in DCSM.

Research Updates

- Multiple researchers from the Regulated Software Research Centre (RSRC) had internationally peer-reviewed papers accepted and presented at various international conferences including: European Systems, Software & Service Process Improvement & Innovation in Grenoble, France on 1st September 2023; Conference in AI and Music Creativity in the University of Sussex in Brighton on 1st September 2023; IEEE International Symposium on Technology and Society in Swansea University in September 2023; 31st Irish Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science (AICS) at the Atlantic Technological University in Letterkenny from 7th - 8th December 2023;
- RSRC researchers published in a number of high impact journals including the Journal of Informatics in Medicine Unlocked.
- Dr Kieran Nolan (DCAMM) co-hosted the 2023 Irish Human Computer Interaction Symposium at DkIT on 17th November 2023.
- Daithí Kearney (DCAMM) presented a paper at the largest ethnomusicology conference in North America, participated in sessions, and facilitated workshops for the Canadian unit of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann at the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference, Ottawa, 21st October 2023. He also published in: Blue Flame, Swim Press; Parenthesis, Litmora and Vital Minutiae Quarterly; Anthropological Journal of European Cultures; International Journal of Tourism Policy.
- Leandro Pessina and Darren Culliney presented their research *on the potential for music and tourism in Louth and also the Irish traditional music ecosystem in the border region* at the Association of Geographical Societies in Europe (EUGEO) conference in Barcelona in September 2023.
- Dr Georgina Hughes (DCAMM) published a journal article on English composer Dame Evelyn Glennie in Ethnomusicology Review (UCLA).
- DCAMM musicians were awarded Culture Ireland and Create Louth funding to perform and facilitate workshops at the Scottish Music Festival from 17-21st July 2024.
- Dr Daithí Kearney was appointed to the board of Siamsa Tíre, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland.
- Dr Daithí Kearney presented at the Society for Music Education in Ireland Conference hosted by the Royal Irish Academy of Music and Trinity College Dublin.
- Dr Adèle Commins - Journal Article published: 'Take Her Out and Air Her': *Irish Dances* as Arranged by Stanford and Grainger', *Musicology Australia*, 45 (1), 22-52, was awarded a prize by the Musicological Society of Australia for the best article published in Musicology Australia.
- Dr Ciaran Ryan published 'Mud, sweat and cameras – Irish trail and mountain running vlogging', in the *Journal Sport in Society* in February 2024.
- Dr Martin Mc Hugh, published a Journal Article 'A Square Peg in a Round Hole – Autistic Students in Third Level Education in Ireland' in the *Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education* March 2024

- DVHCC were shortlisted for the Education Awards 2024, for “Best Online Experience” for their online courses, such as the MSc in Computer Animation, MSc in Games and Extended Reality and the Certificate in 2D/3D Digital Animation Production.



- We had the first intake of students onto the Structured MSc in Computing in Medical Device Software Engineering. These students received scholarships from the Horizon Europe RECON4IMD project which Prof. Fergal Mc Caffery was awarded funding for.
- CARC researchers presented their research at the joint annual conference of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology and the Irish affiliate of the International Council for Traditional Musics and Dance in April 2024.
- Dr Adèle Commins presented a paper 'Charles Villiers Stanford and the Spirit of Adventure Abroad' Irish People in Great Britain (1689-Present): An Interdisciplinary Symposium, at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, in March 2024.
- JJ Quinlan (DCAMM) facilitated a workshop "AI For Digital Design" and presented a conference paper "Exploring the Potential of AI for Innovation in Design Capstone projects" at the National Conference on Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education (GenAIEdu), University of Ulster, 11-13 September 2023. JJ Quinlan also presented two guest lectures at Avans University of Applied Sciences 4 October 2023.
- DCAMM researcher Luke Malone published a paper in the international journal Quarterly Review of Film and Video, in July 2024.
- The school led the development of a large cross-border PEACEPLUS Proposal called SECBA that involved the School of Health and Science and the School of Business and Humanities. This proposal involved collaborating with Cavan Institute of Technology, Monaghan Institute of Technology, Southern Regional College and numerous businesses within the border region.

- Prof. Fergal Mc Caffery collaborated with leading software engineering researchers from Lero and Insight in the development of funding proposals for the SFI Research Centres Call.
- Prof. Fergal Mc Caffery collaborated as a CO-PI with researchers from multiple institutions in the development of a large SFI ARC Hub proposal for ICT, led by TUD.

International Engagement

- Dr Kieran Nolan presented a research talk 'Graffiti Photo Archiving in and Through Video Games' at Fotoludica, the First Italian Conference on In-Game Photography /Primo convegno italiano sulla fotoludica, at IULM University of Milan in March 2024. He also presented a game studies research talk at SUNY University at Buffalo for Replaying Japan 2024, at the 12th International Japanese Game Studies Conference in August 2024. Additionally, Kieran presented a talk at Save the Games: A Digital Preservation Symposium, at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester New York, in August 2024. He also participated in the EU COST project Grassroots of Digital Europe Workshop: from Historic to Contemporary Cultures of Creative Computing (GRADE) at Postane and Bilgi University Istanbul, from 12-13th June 2024.
- Dr Daithí Kearney, had a poem selected for the Spring newsletter of the Society for Ethnomusicology in May 2024. He also published an article in the Italian Journal of Irish Studies and travelled to Italy in September 2024 to present it.
- Ten Creative Media and Film Students participated in an Erasmus Plus Blended Intensive Programme in Spain along with students and lecturers from the Netherlands in January 2024.



- Computing students took part in the eCoal project, an Erasmus BIP initiative hosted in Lens, France. This annual international event, held at the Lens IUT, brought together students from DkIT and three other

colleges from France, Portugal, and Canada to collaborate on a full-stack web development project in February 2024.

- Ten Computing students took part in an EU funded project, called Start-IT, from 17th March to 27th March, 2024. The students were from the BSc (Honours) in Computing in Software Development and the BSc (Honours) in Mathematics and Data Science. A total of 50 students from Ireland, Finland, Germany, Poland and Portugal took part in the project.
- Orla Begley was selected to go to Milwaukee to participate in the Milwaukee Irishfest Festival Experience programme (fully funded) as part of our ongoing collaboration with the Milwaukee Irishfest.
- 17 students from the BA (Hons) Audio and Music Production engaged in a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) activity with students from Seneca College in Toronto, Canada.
- Visiting lecturer and researcher Frode Hammersland from the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences worked with music students in April 2024, to produce two tracks based on compositions by DkIT lecturer Dr Daithí Kearney, which were then mixed and mastered by industry professionals in Sweden
- DCAMM hosted a group of students and staff from Seneca College, Toronto on the Certificate in Irish Traditional Music Programme in July 2024.
- We submitted a successful application with International Office to take international mobility students in 2024-2025 on the BA Creative Media Programme.

11. CELT Report



The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) is located in the South Building, Rooms S201 to S205. It provides a range of services to both staff and students, including the MA Learning and Teaching (MALT), unaccredited CPD in Learning and Teaching and the Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC).

Staff: Moira Maguire (Head of Learning and Teaching), Gerry Gallagher (eLearning Co-ordinator), Laura McKenna (CELT Co-ordinator), Margaret Ward (Digital Skills Learning Advisor), Michelle Woods (Academic Writing Advisor), Orla Hughes (Educational Technologist). Bernadette Brereton and Angela Short are partially seconded to CELT to contribute to the Centre's Learning and Teaching programmes. David Cranny and Karen Dunne also contribute to the MALT programme as needed. Bernadette Brereton retired.

Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching/Certificate in Learning and Teaching

The accredited programmes in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching, Certificate in Learning and Teaching and Certificate in Assessment and Feedback) continued to be successful in the reporting period 2023/2024. The programmes attract learners from among DkIT staff and colleagues from Further Education and Training (FET), post-primary, and private companies across the region. There was a new intake onto the programme in September 2023 – 23 learners. A further seven learners progressed to the final modules and graduated. There were 8 MAs awarded and 2 Certificates in Learning and Teaching.

Programme graduates

Award	No DkIT staff	No external learners	Total no
MA Learning and Teaching	78	37	115

PG Diploma in Learning and Teaching	1	6	7
Certificate in learning and Teaching	19	13	32
Certificate in Assessment and Feedback	1	1	2
Total	99	57	156

Unfortunately, there was insufficient demand to offer the Certificate in Higher and Professional Learning this year. We are planning re redevelop this as a micro-credential.

CELT contributed to the development of the Higher Diploma in Early Years Education for the FET sector which was launched in Spring 2023 and run over academic year 2023-24. The CELT team contributes to the learning and teaching /professional development modules.

StudentSurvey.ie

CELT co-ordinates the rollout of StudentSurvey.ie in DkIT and the analysis and reporting of local results, however 2023/4 was a fallow year as the survey was paused and is undergoing review. Moira Maguire is a member of the national working group reviewing the survey.

Unaccredited CPD Academic Year 2020/21

This focused on assessment and inclusive learning and teaching, including Universal Design for Learning (UDL). A blend of online and face-to-face training and professional development was offered, with attendance generally greater at online sessions in term time.

The schedule of CPD events for the reporting period 2023/2024 was as follows:

Event Title	Date
Academic Integrity and 1 st years Updates	12/9/23 morning, repeated afternoon 13/9/23
Academic Integrity (AI) Mate Demonstration Dr Gina Noonan, SETU	13/11/23
Module design and review	12/3/24
Module design and review	20/3/24
Writing for publication in Learning and Teaching Dr Tom Farrelly, MTU	19/4/24
Masterclass: Developing a Programme Approach to Assessment and Feedback Dr Geraldine O'Neill, UCD	8/5/24

A comprehensive programme of training and professional development in digital accessibility and UDL was offered.

DATE	TOPIC
5 Oct 2023	UDL – An Introduction Teams Webinar
12 Oct 2023	UDL Learner Variability – meeting the needs of all learners
19 Oct 2023	Implementing UDL in Teaching & Learning
26 Oct 23	UDL & Assessments
2 Nov 2023	UDL Checklists
6 Nov 2023	Using the accessibility toolkit on Moodle
9 Nov 2023	Evaluating the effectiveness of UDL
16 Jan 2024	Accessibility & UDL Awareness Workshop
6 Feb 2024	UDL Rubric and Checklist Workshop
10 April 2024	Moodle and digital accessibility – how to audit your Moodle modules
23 May 2024	UDL Resource Support Session for Programmatic Review
13 June 2024	UDL Resource Support Session for Programmatic Review
18 June 2024	School of ICA – UDL & Programmatic Review

Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC)

The SLDC continued to offer a comprehensive programme of academic support to students. This was both face-to-face and online. It included scheduled workshops, small group tutorials and one-to-one tutorials in all aspects of academic writing, study skills, exam technique, presentation skills, MS Office 365 applications. Induction took place on 14th and 15th September 2023. 1256 students were invited and were supported by 118 fully trained student ambassadors. Feedback was very positive.

As shown below, use of the SLDC was higher than last year and in line with pre-COVID levels. First-years remain the heaviest users however students (and staff) at all stages access the service. While first-year students remain the heaviest users of the SLDC, all other student groups were well represented.

Use of SLDC by stage/category since 2018

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Masters	19	3	95	24	35	57
Multiple	66	30	320	24	52	218
PhD	6	7	10	4	34	17
Staff	3	4	210	5	7	3
Y1	572	555	495	295	536	617
Y2	139	192	179	156	112	80
Y3	156	304	181	159	156	152
Y4	200	129	206	118	138	96
Grand Total	1,161	1,224	1,696	1,557	1,070	1,294

Student use of SLDC by type of provision since 2018

Row Labels	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Academic 1:1 Tutorials	242	149	406	192	157	178
Academic Group Tutorials	287	231	301	158	364	16
Group Tutorials for Lecturers	288	480	344	621	276	921
IT Students 1:1	100	48	48	55	61	44
IT Groups	92	83	43	2	24	4

Drop In Students	105	233	-	179	188	128
Online drop-in/email			346 students 208 (staff)	296 (students) 55 (staff)		
Introduction to SLDC	47	-	-			3
Grand Total	1,161	1,224	1696	1557	1,070	1294

Academic Year 2023-24 – SLDC Hub Student Usage

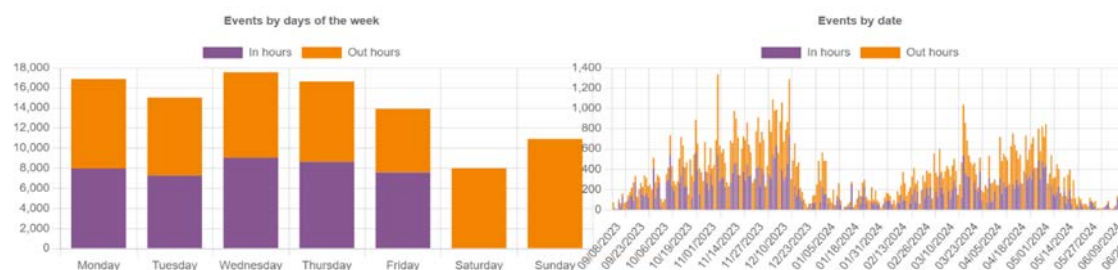
As was the case in 2022/23, there was significant student use of the SLDC Moodle Hub in 2023/24. Figure 1 shows that 2493 students logged into the SLDC Hub on Moodle during the 2023-24 academic year and that over 60% of their activity was outside of standard hours – evenings and weekends, suggesting the hub is achieving its goal of providing greater access to support out of hours.

Student use of the SLDC Moodle Support Hub

Role	# of Unique Users
Student	2493
Staff	0
Teacher	1

Activity by Role	% In Hours	% Out Hours
All student activity	39.48%	60.52%
All staff activity	0%	0%
All teacher activity	90.92%	9.08%

Student use of SLDC support hub by day and time



The above shows a total of 40551 events logged in standard working hours and 58415 during evenings and weekends, with a combined total of 98966 events across the academic year.

Funded Enhancement Projects

Strategic Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (SATLE) Fund 2023

SATLE is a non-competitive fund from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and co-ordinated and supported locally by CELT. Under the 2023 fund, DkIT was awarded €111, 000. The funding supported a multi-strand DkIT project 'Programme design for a time of change' that focused on academic integrity, digital transformation and inclusive learning at the programme level with an emphasis on supporting upcoming programmatic reviews. This project built on the previous 'Assessment for all' project with a greater focus on programme-focused approaches. Details of the project strands are below

Details of the 'Assessment for All' project strands are below. The student enhancement intern scheme was particularly successful. This scheme was initiated in 2019 as part of a previously funded project and has been developed each year since, with the support of SATLE funding. This year's students developed a range of excellent resources to support academic integrity and these have been disseminated to acclaim in DkIT and beyond. A video they created is part of the N-TUTORR Academic Integrity Digital Badge offered on the technological-sector-wide student digital backpack. This badge has been completed by over 3,000 students to date, across the entire sector. The students presented on their work to a national digital education conference in December 2023 [DkIT Students Present Innovative Student Resources They Created at National Digital Education Conference / News / DkIT - Dundalk Institute of Technology](#)

Assessment for All: Designing Assessment for Inclusion Project Streams.

Working title	Inclusive learning, teaching and assessment – programme level approaches	Building digital capacity	Promoting a culture of academic integrity
Co-ordinated by	Inclusive L&T working group	E-learning unit	Registrar's Office & CELT
Activities			
Training and professional development	Seminars, workshops and resource development focused on education for sustainable development, inclusive learning and teaching, including UDL. Development of guidelines and resources to support	Workshops Piloting assessment and feedback tools. Development of guidelines to support programme teams with a focus on programmatic review	Seminars, workshops and resource development. Survey of staff perceptions of guidance around artificial intelligence and assessment for students and staff

	<p>programme teams, with a focus on curriculum review and design</p> <p>Sharing practice book - 'You can UDL it!' completed summer 2024</p> <p>Development of an Inclusive Learning and Teaching space on Moodle <u>Course: Programmatic Review Hub DkIT Moodle 2023-24 Inclusive</u></p>	<p>Ongoing development of learning and teaching resources on Moodle.</p> <p>Ongoing Vevox pilot</p>	<p>Additional academic integrity support for students (1 x tutor x day per week)</p> <p>Academic integrity guide for 1st years – hard copy given to each new student as part of induction. Available online here <u>https://issuu.com/dkit.ie/docs/dkit-academic-integrity</u></p> <p>Guidance by students, for students, see below</p>
Studentships	<p>8 summer enhancement studentships</p> <p>The students focused on the student experience. They developed a guide for international students <u>Stepping-into-Dundalk</u> and a guide for class representatives Class-Rep-Handbook, in collaboration with the Students' Union. They also reviewed worked on resources for a digital badge in employability. These guides are available on the National Forum's Digital Repository resources.</p>		
Open Education Resources Project –	<p>Building capacity in Open Educational Practices (OEP) and Open Educational Resources (OER). In collaboration with TUS, SETU and MU. TUS leading.</p>		
Local Enhancement projects	<p>10 local enhancement projects were supported with grants of up to €4,000. These programme-focused projects, which spanned all four schools, addressed a range of areas with each project being aligned with one or more of the SATLE priorities of Education for Sustainable Development, Digital Transformation and Academic Integrity. All four Project topics included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding Global Citizenship in the Business curriculum • World Café to engaged Public Patient Involvement (PPI) • MATHS FOR ALL – Real World Engineering Maths Education • Embedding peer support into midwifery education • Assessment design for a changing world 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creating a shared vision of/for UDL among staff and students • Enhancing the Inclusivity and Accessibility of Communication to Students • Enhancing simulation within professional nursing and midwifery programmes • 'At the OSCE's'-Video led practical guide for clinical skills development and assessment • 'AI in the context of Audio-Visual Production and Education'
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NTUTORR

Moira Maguire and Gerry Gallagher were DkIT's representatives on a sectoral working group to develop a cross-technological sector proposal to transform learning and teaching and the student experience across the sector. This group developed the proposal for the 2 -year NTUTORR project which secured €40 million funding from the National Recovery and Resilience Fund N-TUTORR - Transforming Learning: Home. The project began in April 2022. There are three projects streams across the sector: Student Empowerment; Staff Capabilities and Digital Ecosystems. Moira Maguire co-leads the Student Empowerment Stream with Dr Carina Ginty, ATU. CELT continued to support the implementation of the N-TUTORR project in DkIT.

PATH 4

CELT was a partner in the PATH 1 Phase 1 project. The eLearning Unit co-ordinated WP 3 'Enhancing digital accessibility' and conducted a digital accessibility audit on Moodle. The findings have been used to inform a programme of training. CELT also supported the successful PATH 4 Phase 2 application, led by the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years.

Scholarship and Scholarly Outputs: CELT continued to play a key role in supporting the development of scholarly activity in learning and teaching throughout the Institute. CELT staff were actively involved in learning and teaching scholarship, including publishing papers and presenting to academic conferences and supporting the Learning and Teaching Research Group.

Priorities for 2023/24:

- To continue to provide effective support for all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment.
- To support preparation for programmatic review
- To promote and support enhancement and sharing of good practice across DkIT

12. Marketing and Communications

During this period (2023-2024) the overriding objective of the Marketing & Communications Department was to maintain our student registrations in September 2024. Amidst a challenging and competitive landscape, the Department fine-tuned a series of strategic initiatives aimed at reinforcing our brand's presence and ensuring continued relevance in the market.

Key objectives included enhancing existing communication channels, refining messaging & visual presentation, ensuring a consistency across all platforms, and maximizing resource allocation to sustain our current market share. By leveraging data-driven insights, we optimized our campaigns, strengthened relationships with key stakeholders, and maintained high levels of audience engagement.

We had a focused and strategic approach to Marketing & Communications during 2023-2024. Given the fluctuations in course registrations it was important we stayed adaptable. We paid very close attention to the CAO data, remaining proactive during critical periods like Change of Mind/Available Places. We consciously tried to remain agile, responding quickly to shifts and changes in course registrations.

During this period Marketing and Communications attended 112 separate occasions on campus, filmed on 37 occasions with 25 of them being student profiles.

In summary, 2024 was a year of strategic consistency, with the Marketing & Communications team successfully safeguarding our brand's position in an evolving environment. We are poised for the next phase with a very clear understanding of what works for our audience.

The M&C team lead out on managing DkIT's website, the shop front for Dundalk Institute of Technology and our social media channels. M&C research, write and craft 100's of press releases every year that are issued to both local, national, international publications and trade publications. M&C attend all the events on campus and take 1,000's of photographs to accompany the written words. M&C engage weekly with local and national radio and broadcast outlets. The team produce all the printed promotional communication materials for the Institution. Monthly the team produce an internal e-zine that spreads the good news messages within our internal community. All our students are heroes and our student stories take time and effort to craft, shoot and edit. M&C endeavour to be the support mechanism and backbone for Schools and Departments, as they engage with potential students, *DkIT Loves STEM*, *Iwish*, *TY Dragons Den*, *Scifest*. M&C assist the School Liaison office in delivering Open Days, information events, school campus tours and visits. M&C attend student and school events.

M&C's target audience falls within three distinct categories.

- Communication to all potential students, Undergraduate, Lifelong Learner, Postgraduates.
- Communication to parents and guardians.
- Communication to business and enterprise, strengthening institutional reputation and regional impact

During the period of 2023–2024 Marketing & Communications instigated a number of ambitious traditional and digital marketing campaigns to engage and inform these three groups.

Communication to all potential students

During the summer of 2023 M&C team worked collaboratively to devise and design a contemporary refresh for our marketing brand, used on the front of our prospectus and our outdoor/print campaigns. As a team, M&C were able to agree on a new departure regarding brand colours, style and tag lines. This new branding was used on the prospectus 2023, billboard and bus stop campaigns 2023/2024.

The campaign features local students who are pursuing degrees, Robyn Woods who is studying for a Bachelor of Civil Engineering, Michael Traynor for a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering, Naomi Uamai who is a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Business and Technology, and currently works for Accenture, Fayaz Khalid for a Bachelor of Science in Software development and Lane Galvin who is completing a Masters in research in Midwifery. In June 2024 we added in Adam Murray from Drogheda to give it another refresh.

M&C captured their feelings on being educated in the Institute. The billboard campaign depicts their feedback on DkIT "feeling like a journey, growth, opportunity, the future and passion".

The campaign was created around DkIT's students and how DkIT is much more than a place of learning; it's a place of growth that supports each students' individual needs.

- New Prospectus Style [\[Click here to view\]](#)

Cinema Campaign

We now have a consistent and much talked about route to market our Cinema Campaigns. Within the team M&C we have the expertise and resources to shoot, edit and post produce our own cinema campaigns. M&C do not have to hire an agency or third party to assist us with these campaigns. Cinema campaigns work for DkIT as they are without risk. There is a guaranteed audience figure given at the time of booking the slot, if the projected audience number isn't reached the campaign will run until it is reached. In a number of our recent campaigns, we have over reached our numbers.

Sep 2023	PG Courses	3 weeks run time	Admissions 364,248
Dec/Jan 2024	PG Course	2 week run time	Admissions 68,727
Jan 2024	UG Courses	2 week run time	Admissions 220,512
March 2024	UG Courses	1 week run time	Admissions 217,813
Aug 2024	UG Courses	1 weeks run time	Admissions 85,160
Aug 2024	PG Courses	1 week run time.	Admissions 39,368

- Undergraduate Cinema Campaign [\[Click here to view\]](#)

Billboard Campaign [Undergraduate]

With our new student focused re-branding, in the summer of 2023, we decided to trial a small targeted billboard campaign. This campaign was devised and designed in-house by the team. M&C did not need to hire a third party to assist with this campaign.

Outdoor campaigns [Billboard & Bus Shelter]

During the summer of 2023 M&C decided to test the market with a small outdoor campaign. This was such a success we decided to run a Jan campaign and a summer 2024 campaign. These campaigns had a consistency and therefore M&C hoped our approach would deliver maximum impact at a crucial time for student recruitment. That our potential students would quickly come to recognise DkIT as an outdoor campaign.

- Undergraduate Billboard Campaign [[Click here to view](#)]
- Undergraduate Bus stop Campaign [[Click here to view](#)]

Our locations were strategically selected. M&C chose sites with high volume traffic within our catchment area of the Northeast.

September 2023 – Billboards:

2 x Dundalk Billboard [Hill St Bridge/Bridge St]

2 x Drogheda [Georges Street & Mary Street]

1 x Monaghan [Coming into town]

1 x Cavan [Near Virginia – main road to Cavan town]

September 2023 - Bus shelter sites:

2 x Dundalk [Hospital/Blackrock]

2 x Drogheda [Scotch Hall Shopping Centre, Dublin Road Bus Shelter]

June 2024 – Digital Screens:

3 x Tesco screens [2 x Drogheda, 1 x Dundalk]

2 x digital iVision screens available in Scotch Hall SC

- Digital Screen Campaign [[Click here to view](#)]

June 2024 - Bus shelter sites:

Haggardstown , Blackrock, Drogheda , Ardee

Ongoing Digital Screen

We have an annual subscription to the digital screen on Park St/Hill St. We constantly update and use to promote Open Days, Change of Mind, CAO.

Open Days

Between September 2023 - August 2024 M&C held 3 of face-to-face Open Days and Events on campus for potential students. These events are widely advertised with pre-registration essential and for a limited time M&C are in a position to use the freely given data of the registered attendees.

- November 2023 – Open Evening
- January 2024 – CAO Information Morning
- April 2024 – Open Evening [Experiential Event]
- August 2024 – Chat Bot for Change of Mind/Available Places

Targeted Emails Campaign & Postal Campaign

CAO supply higher education institutes with both emails and postal addresses for all students who have mentioned them on their CAO forms. Marketing and Communications use this data in two ways. Firstly M&C build a digital email campaign that is course specific and contains video material giving a unique insight into the course and career opportunities that the applicant has chosen. Each email is anchored by a digital student story. M&C have over a 63% open rate on our Digital Email Campaigns, with an industry norm being between 23-27%. During the period 2023 – 2024 M&C sent out nearly 7,000 emails, M&C sent 773 EU international and 303 to UK and NI students.

Secondly, with the postal addresses supplied M&C send out a Good Luck in Your Exams postcards, designed in house, indicating all the ways that students can get in touch with us after their exams, before Change of Mind closes.

- Good Luck Postcards [[Click here to view](#)]

The strategy to these campaigns, communicating directly with potential students, is constituency, repeating a similar message in many different ways. From March through to post exams M&C are in regular contact with our data base of potential students.

National Events

These events straddle two distinct audiences, parents/guardians and potential students: September 2023 - Higher Options RDS, and March 2024 – UCAS.

- ♦ DkIT Stands [[Click here to view](#)]

Communication to parents and guardians & Life Long Learners

In addition to the communication and campaigns directed at potential students, M&C run in tandem more traditional campaigns that M&C feel are speaking to parents and guardians of potential students, and an older demographic that would be interested in returning to education - lifelong learners.

- LLC Ads [[Click here to view](#)]

Radio – LMFM & NORTHERN SOUND

M&C have our two local radio stations on annual retainers. This allows us to generate campaigns with a very quick turn-around. M&C promote all our PG and LLC, on-campus events, Sports Scholarships, special events and guest speakers and pertinent dates within the CAO schedule. Depending on the campaign M&C will use some Northern Ireland radio stations.

Radio – NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Ever since September 2022, M&C run a two-week National Campaign on the Baur Media Stations [Today FM, Newstalk, 98FM, Spin 103] promoting our Additional Places campaign.

In September 2023, the advert ran over 5 weeks, **1,493,000** (Reach) heard the ad across the four stations. This was heard on average 6.8 times per listener (Average Frequency). Creating over 10.2 million audio impressions (Impacts).

Communications & Press

Between August 2023 and August 2024, M&C wrote and circulated 198 press releases. These releases were circulated both locally and nationally. These covered stories featuring current and past students, academics, events, awards and good news stories from across DkIT. The Average Value Equivalency [AVE] of column inches was €4.6m. The audience reach was 173.8m and the interactions were 32.4k.

Advertorials

The team has the resources and capabilities to produce standout editorial articles featuring our staff and students. In all cases we write in-house and supply the publication with the imagery. In the case of the Irish Independent we take out adverts in the publication, supplying the articles and photographs to the Education Correspondent, hoping to get them printed. During the period 2023 – 2024 we did the following.

Irish Independent September 2023 – we secured two editorials. Robyn Wood, an engineering student who had transferred from Psychology in NUI Galway. We also got a feature with Liam McCourt studying Arts.

- Robyn Wood – [\[Click Here to view\]](#)
- Liam McCourt – [\[Click here to view\]](#)

Irish Independent January 2024 – we secured an editorial with Ciara Smith, final year Agricultural student.

- Ciara Smith – [\[Click here to view\]](#)

Hot Press is a publication we use to promote courses in the School of Informatics and Creative Arts.

- Hot Press August 2024 – Jessica Doherty, Film and Tv Graduate discussing her award winning documentary. [\[Click here to view\]](#)
- Hot Press August 2023 – we decided to do a colour piece on all the new audio courses coming down stream in DkIT. [\[Click here to view\]](#)

Social Media:

Social Channel	August '22	August '23	August '24	YOY Increase 22-23	YOY Increase 23-24	DkIT posts	Engagement
Facebook	17657	18353	19262	3.94%	4.95%	369	610k reach
Instagram	5131	6207	6869	20%	10.60%	267	184k reach
Twitter/X	6226	6466	6472	3.1%	0.09%	144	Can no longer access, now premium on X
LinkedIn	25229	29020	31098	15%	7.16%	210	903k impressions

Monthly Ezine

From August 2023-2024, M&C wrote and produced 12 ezines in total with an average read rate is 3.5k.

Northern Ireland Campaigns

M&C strive to include our catchment area across the border in all our campaigns. Our catchment areas in Northern Ireland comprise of the two closest council areas: Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon council along with Newry and Mourne council (combined population of over 400,000).

Our UG & PG cinema campaigns broadcast in cinemas as far north as Craigavon and Banbridge. We have a good relationship with Q Radio [Newry & Mourne] and when advertising Open Days and events we include them on our roster. Our print campaigns run in the Irish News [Newry], Newry Democrat, Newry Reporter and Mourne Observer (S Down area) as well as Armagh I [Local independent news website]. Online advertising and campaigns stretch round the entirety of County Armagh and Mid and South Down.

- NI Advertising [[Click here to view](#)]

In the summer of 2024, we got a one-page feature on a recent graduate Niamh Fallon who hailed from Newry and is currently working in Liverpool.

- Niamh Fallon Coverage [[Click here to view](#)]
-

Communication to business & enterprise – strengthening institutional reputation and regional impact

Marketing and Communications supports the activity within the Regional Development Centre [RDC] with press releases and photographer. M&C also assist where possible with RDC website support. During this period M&C promoted a MoU with Dundalk Credit Union and Kaseya. This announcement resulted in an extra 800 LinkedIn followers.

Website Update

On September 11th, 2023, the website reported a high level of unusual traffic from Vietnam, which resulted in an SQL (database) injection attack on the course search area of the website. The website was taken offline, a firewall (Cloudflare) was put in place, and the website was scanned and cleaned. The website was partially put back online on 13th September and was fully operational again on 18th October, following the resolution of all actions from HEAnet Penetration Tests.

Outcomes:

- Website Penetration test with HEAnet: 2 follow up test were carried out and this will be planned annually going forward.
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) signed by DkIT Marketing (Webmaster), DkIT Computer Services, and 3rd party web development partner, MOR. This agreement ensures that all parties involved can align their efforts, mitigate potential conflicts, and collectively contribute to the sustained success and optimal performance of the website.
- Established Interim Backup and Recovery Solution

Tender for Major Website Development Work

DkIT was awarded TSAF funding to enhance the DkIT website, including moving to a new CMS, hosting and backup solution, and a new support contract. The tender was issued in April 2024 with final contracts signed in September 2024. (Estimated Delivery Date is May 2025) This tender also included the development of microsites for Research Centres, within the same infrastructure, funded under the TURise initiative. (Estimated Delivery Date: September 2025)

The main goal of this project are to:

- Develop one platform for all DkIT website real estate
- Centralise governance and monitoring of legal requirements, including: GDPR, Cookie Compliance and Accessibility Directive
- Microsite for Research Centres: Establish a template for all DkIT research centres, where they will manage their own content.
- Centralise Institute Policies: The website requires one central area for policies and procedures with the ability to tag and embed across other areas of the website. This will improve the management and display of policies and procedures across the website and will include a better search and filtering functionality.
- The website requires one central area for policies and procedures with the ability to tag and embed across other areas of the website.
- Accessibility: The new website will be coded to meet requirements under the EU Web Accessibility Directive, which states that all public sector bodies in Ireland must ensure their websites are accessible to everybody, including people with disabilities.

- Schools Outreach Redevelopment: A more user friendly search and booking facility for primary and secondary schools.
- Improve overall design, with a focus on mobile experience
- Forms: reduce the types of forms and what they're used for, with a focus on GDPR and data processing requirements.
- Speed up future website developments with a design system approach

A Decommissioning Plan was developed to for the old Drupal website to outline the different areas that remain and the actions that need to be taken before it reaches end of life. The following sections were successfully migrated to the new website:

- Computer Service
- Human Resource Department
- Health and Safety
- Music Research

In anticipation of the new website launching in 2025, upgrades and new developments on the current website were scaled back significantly.

However, the below is a sample of some of the projects and upgrades implemented:

- Introduction of a new gallery component to website: To showcase schools outreach activities, and for use across the site
- Improve block quote styling for news items, to make them more prominent
- Update main call to action colour on button and links across the site, to address colour contrast issues (accessibility)
- Website content updates: 164 webdesk ticket requests for updates / improvements etc
- Development of a new SharePoint Site for internal communication about [Science Outreach Activity](#).

13. Research, Innovation & Development

13.1 Research and Graduate Studies

The 2023/2024 Annual report for the Research and Graduate Studies Office is structured around each of the reporting metrics for the institute's research centres and groups, that are embedded across the four academic schools and strategically supported by the Research Office, Graduate Studies Office and the Regional Development Centre. The report details an overview of the high-level achievements obtained by the institute in relation to its research performance across the academic year 2023/2024.

Introduction

The principle aim of research is both to answer key questions and to generate new knowledge in specific domains. The Institute prides itself on supporting and engaging in a broad range of research enquiry across a range of disciplines which are aligned to the research and innovation core principles. The Institute's approach to research has always been to invest in growth areas of strategic importance, which are aligned with our research strengths and which are informed by the external environment. Our research is founded upon excellence led by global needs with real-world societal and economic impacts.

Excellence with an emphasis upon “translational research with impact – TRL level refocus”

Research with real societal and economic impact which addresses current global challenges Horizon Europe

Research which is consolidated and concentrated into cross-cutting interdisciplinary teams within our prioritized research themes

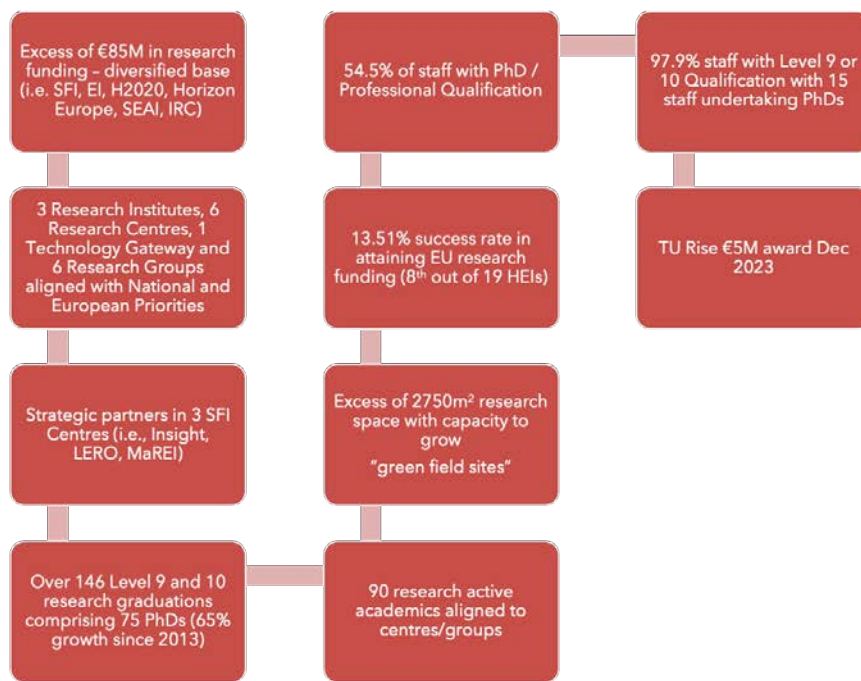
The strategic direction and operational management of research across the campus is a partnership approach between the academic schools, Research and Graduate Studies Office and the Regional Development Centre.



The consolidation and concentration of our research into thematic areas of strength which are underpinned by internationally recognised research teams has been at the heart of strategic development for the past decade. The Institute has always recognised the need to have a diversity of research centres and groups, including academic, industry facing and mission- orientated which underpin our thematic areas. In view of the size of the Institute in terms of its research community, collaboration between existing research centres and groups and consolidation of existing groups and centres has been encouraged and achieved over the lifecycle of the current

research strategy (2020-2024). However, there is further scope to build upon this with further possible consolidation and development of collaborative synergies between existing teams of researchers. This allows a focus on building higher critical mass within our prioritised research themes.

Institutional High-Level Achievements



Institutional Professional Support Staff

The Research and Graduate Studies Office are the primary professional support unit within the institute for the operational and professional development of Graduate Studies within the institute. The office is composed of the following staff members:

- Dr Tim McCormac (Head of Research and Graduate Studies)
- Orla Lynch (Research Office Manager)
- Elaine O'Neill (Research Projects)
- Aideen Gaynor (Postgraduate Research Support Office)
- Joanne Kearns (Postgraduate Research Support Officer)

The office is committed to providing the researcher community at DkIT with the resources required to ensure they are effectively supported in their career development, their pursuit of research funding and throughout their postgraduate research degree. Students undertaking a postgraduate degree in the Institute are supported from the outset by the Research and Graduate Studies Office who provide clear guidance and support throughout the entire postgraduate cycle from recruitment to registration through to graduation and where required, act as liaison between the student and the wider DkIT support units. These supports range from

assisting with the preparation and collation of all administration forms required for the registration process and the provision of information regarding other support units on campus, including the DkIT Health Unit, and Student Services. International postgraduate students are provided with relevant information on the legal requirements for a move to Ireland, including how to apply for PPS numbers, and the provision of support letters for Visa applications, where relevant. In addition to their supervisory team, the Research and Graduate Studies Office ensure that all students are appointed an Independent Panel Member (IPM) who they meet with on an annual basis and are an advocate for them, should they require it. The postgraduate research administrative support staff also assists the students and their supervisory team in the PhD viva voce examinations process, liaising with examiners, and providing all necessary administrative support. The Research and Graduate Studies Office provide support and training to postgraduate supervisory teams to ensure that all DkIT postgraduates are receiving the most effective and efficient supervision, which caters not only to the academic needs but also to their wider well-being.

The Research Office assist the wider DkIT research community through the provision of dedicated supports in the areas of career development, preparation of funding strategies for both individuals and research centres/groups, the delivery of training, and the provision of pre- and post-award administrative support. The primary focus of the Research and Graduate Studies Office is to enhance and diversify the Institute's research funding streams. This is achieved through horizon scanning of future funding opportunities, providing hands-on, experienced support in the preparation of funding applications, liaising with external funders and lobbying for increased financial support of under-funded, strategically important areas. The Research and Graduate Studies Office sits on numerous national committees and bodies and keeps abreast of all relevant national and international policies to ensure that the supports it delivers are appropriate and effective. This extends to the provision of Researcher training. The Office is dedicated to providing training that will ensure that researchers, at all careers stages, are well prepared and equipped with the knowledge and skills required to effectively support their postgraduate students and continue on an upward career trajectory. The Office is responsible for developing and managing numerous internal funding opportunities, including the annual DkIT Postgraduates scholarship scheme and Career Development Opportunities for Early to Advanced-stage researchers, providing teaching buy-out to facilitate the progress of research interests and the pursuit of external funding opportunities.

Our Research Clusters and Teams

The consolidation and concentration of our research into thematic areas of strength which are underpinned by internationally recognised research teams has been at the heart of our strategic development for the past decade. The Institute has always recognised the need to have a diversity of research centres and groups, including academic, industry facing and mission-orientated which underpin our thematic areas. In view of the size of the Institute in terms of its research community, collaboration between existing research centres and groups and consolidation of existing groups and centres has been encouraged and achieved. At present, the institute has six research centres and seven research groups. Outside of our established research centres and groups there are individual researchers across the four academic schools who are not formally aligned within existing research centres and groups but bring their own research expertise and outputs to the Institute's research vision in their individual fields of enquiry.

ICT, Health and Ageing Cluster

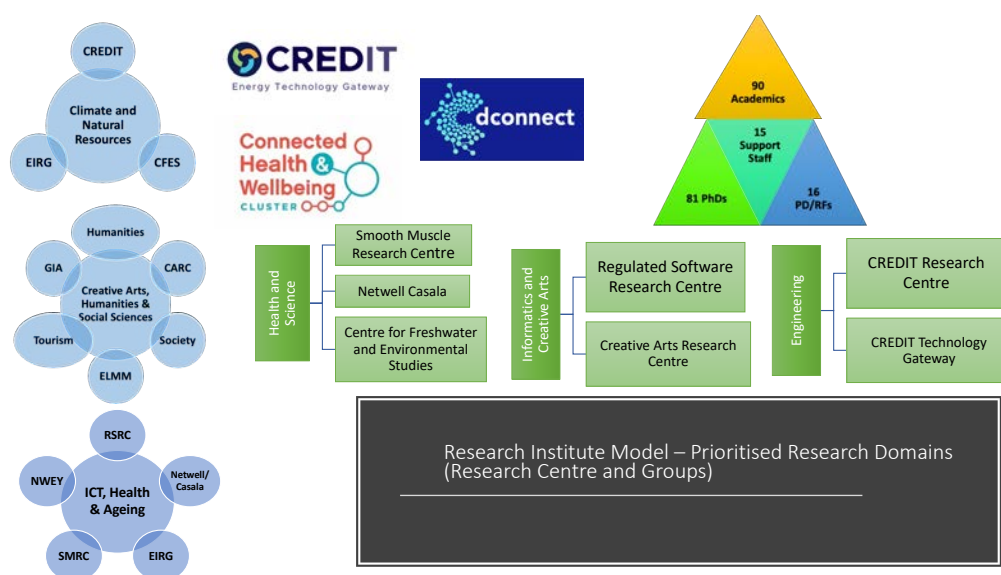
This theme represents the highest number of associated research centres and groups spanning two academic schools, namely, Health & Science and Informatics & Creative Arts. There are three research centres, namely, Smooth Muscle, Regulated Software and Netwell/Casala, and three research groups, Interfaces & Electrochemistry (EIRG) and the newly established Nursing, Midwifery & Early Years (NWEY) and Applied Data Analytics groups (ADARG), aligned to this Institute.

Climate and Natural Resources Cluster

This theme spans two academic schools, Health & Science and Engineering and is composed of two research centres, Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) and Centre for Freshwater & Environmental Studies (CFES), and one research group, Electrochemistry and Interfaces (EIRG), with the latter also conducting research underpinning the health domain.

Creative Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences Cluster

Comprised of one research centre, Creative Arts (CARC) and five research groups, Humanities, Society, Tourism, Gender & Inclusion Academy (GIA) and Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Marketing and Management (ELMM), this institute spans two academic schools, Humanities & Business and Informatics & Creative Arts.



Specific Areas of Expertise

- Human Computer Interaction and Digital Health
- Wearables for Human Performance
- Social Policy for the Ageing Agenda
- Software Engineering and Regulation

- Medical Device Testing and Cybersecurity
- Drug Discovery for Disease States and Ion Channels
- Lake and catchment management
- Organic Resources management
- Water, Communities and Development
- Electrochemistry, batteries and material science
- Environmental sensors and CO2 capture
- Marine, Wind and Distributed Energy
- Energy Integration
- Musicology
- Gender, Sexuality and the Creative Arts
- Film and Identity
- Ethnomusicology and Geographies of Creative Arts Practice
- Creative Technologies and Gaming
- British and Irish History
- The Archaeology of Ancient Ireland

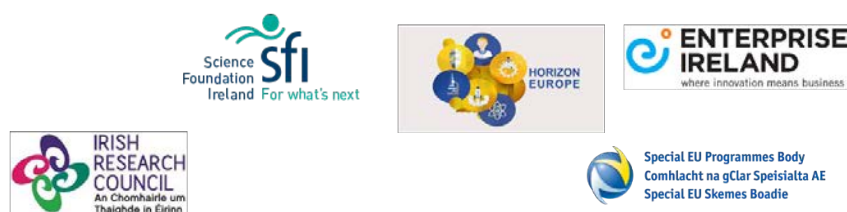
Research Income

The Institute has an annual research income of €5million (2023), and is currently managing 28 externally funded research projects from funders such as the Irish Research Council, Science Foundation Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, European Commission, Teagasc, Creative Ireland and the HEA. The latter excludes the €5M award secured through the HEA TU Rise initiative secured in late 2023.

Some recent external funding highlights include,

- €5M secured through TU RISE CREATE Project to fund 12 PhDs, 4 PDs, 2RFs, 5 Support Staff and support 85 enterprises (2023)
- €1.473M RFAM funding secured over last 5 years based on research and innovation performance
- Innovators Initiative – DkIT Lead DigiBio €6,984,625 (2023)
- CFES IRC Postdoctoral Fellowship (2024) circa €150K
- RSRC Recon4IMD – Horizon Europe RSRC (€6M project) (2023)

- RSRC awarded 2 DTIFs (€900K) Medical device cybersecurity transparency
- CREDIT secured €250K SFI Energy Innovation Challenge Fund (2023)



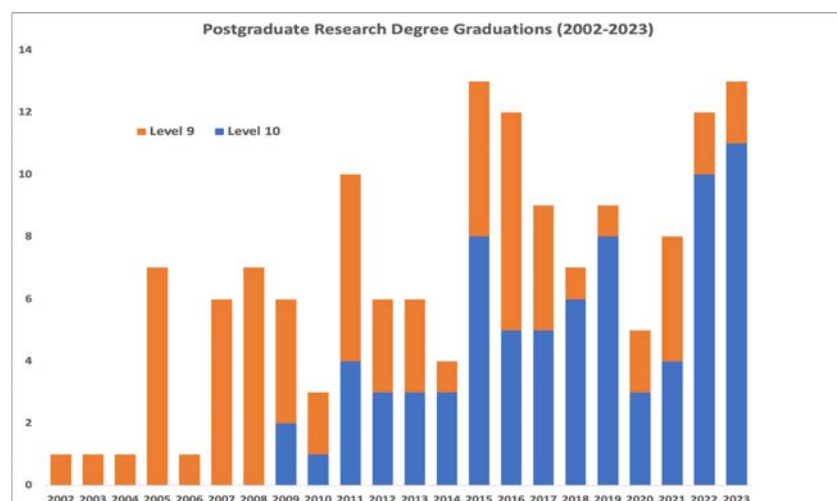
Peer Reviewed Output – Scopus Database Analysis

During the calendar years of 2023 and 2024 there was over 100 peer reviewed research outputs as captured through the Scopus database. These were comprised of xx articles, xx conference papers, xx book chapters, x reviews and x books. On average the top eight discipline areas are listed in Table 1 below

Discipline Area	Peer Reviewed Output
Environmental Science	33
Social Sciences	26
Medicine	24
Computer Science	23
Mathematics	20
Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology	17
Engineering	16
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	15

Postgraduate Research Student Graduations and Registrations

There were 13 postgraduate research degree graduations from across three academic schools with the first PhD coming from the School of Engineering. Of the 13 there were 11 PhDs and 2 Masters by research. This now brings our total research graduations to 146 comprising 75 PhDs and 71 Masters (39 MAs and 32 MScs). This is a significant achievement especially considering the first 2 PhD graduations were in 2009.



Researcher and Staff Training

An inherent part of the development of postgraduate research studies at the Institute has been the formalised approach to researcher and staff training in both discipline specific and transferable skills in line with international best practice. Through the Research and Graduate Studies Office, a series of annual structured training programmes, in addition to staff and postgraduate induction sessions have been implemented and enhanced annually. The non-accredited generic skill programmes for postgraduate researchers are structured around the Irish Universities Association (IUA) skills statement for PhD provision (<https://www.iua.ie/publications/iua-phd-graduate-skills-statement-2021/>).

The following face-to-face workshops are some examples that are delivered by the Research and Graduate Studies Office:

- Postgraduate Research student induction programme (biannual – compulsory)
- Exports controls (compulsory)
- Research integrity (compulsory)
- Research Methods
- Data management
- Survival Skills for Postgraduate Students.
- Literature Research on the Web.
- Workshop on Writing your thesis.
- Strategies for Time Management.
- Measuring your Research Impact.
- Research Presentation and Communication Skills.
- Surviving the Viva: Masters-PhD Transfer and PhD Viva.
- Mini-Conference on Current and Proposed Projects.
- Research Ethics at DkIT: Principles and Practice.
- Training as a Tutor and Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- Survival Skills for Postgraduate Students.
- Research Publishing Workshop.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, training was moved online with the roll out of suite of programmes through the Epigeum platform (<https://www.epigeum.com/>). As the pandemic eased and the returned to full time education across postgraduate research on site reconvened a blended approach (workshop versus on line) was pursued.

During the 23/24 academic year the Institute offered the following on-line strategic training platforms to all staff and researchers:

Platform 1: Supervising Doctoral Studies

The second edition of *Supervising Doctoral Studies* offers comprehensive, flexible and engaging training in the core principles and practices of doctoral supervision to equip new and more experienced supervisors to support doctoral candidates' development into independent researchers. All research supervisors irrespective of experience and those wishing to become research supervisors must take and complete this programme prior to embarking upon research supervision. Taking a streamlined, modular approach, the modules recognise research supervision as a distinct academic practice, requiring supervisors to develop a specific set of skills, knowledge and understanding to guide a diverse range of candidates to successful and timely completion. The programme provides guidance in the most effective and up-to-date supervisory techniques, using video interviews, case studies, and thought-provoking scenarios and activities to highlight best practice and to encourage supervisors to reflect on their own approach. Covering supervisors' core responsibilities in supporting candidates' research, their development as researchers, and establishing effective supervisory relationships, this edition also addresses new and emerging developments in the field ensuring that supervisors maintain a current knowledge of the continually-changing context in which they work, and are able to navigate both academic and non-academic responsibilities with confidence:

1. **Your Experience and Priorities for Development:** This pre-programme diagnostic tool acknowledges that each supervisor will bring different levels of experience, skills and confidence to the programme. It offers an opportunity to reflect on a number of realistic scenarios, in order to generate personalised recommendations on which modules in the programme to prioritise.
2. **Introduction: The Doctoral Context:** This module introduces the evolving nature and purpose of doctoral studies, and expectations and characteristics of effective doctoral supervision.
3. **Attracting and Selecting Doctoral Applicants:** This module explores strategies for attracting, recruiting and evaluating prospective doctoral candidates, raises awareness of the influence of unconscious bias, and covers pre-arrival support.
4. **Research Cultures and Environments:** This module identifies key features of positive research cultures, and proposes ways in which supervisors can support candidates from diverse backgrounds and modes of study to participate successfully in research cultures and engage with the wider research environment.
5. **Managing Expectations, Responsibilities and Relationships:** This module describes the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and candidates, and the importance of aligning expectations of responsibilities at the beginning and over the course of candidature. It also explores key principles for creating productive, respectful and inclusive relationships with candidates.
6. **Planning and Conducting Research:** This module explores the supervisor's role in guiding candidates to carry out the various stages of their research, and to manage their project and time to ensure successful and timely completion. It also addresses risk mitigation and what to do when things go wrong.

7. **Developing the Researcher and Enabling Progress:** Covering the support of candidates' progress not only with their research but also their broader personal development plans, this module provides guidance on scaffolding your supervisory support according to the individual's needs and the stage of candidature, to develop independent researchers.
8. **Doctoral Writing and Effective Feedback:** This module explores pedagogies for developing candidates' writing, and strategies for delivering effective feedback.
9. **Supporting your Candidate:** This module provides guidance on identifying and responding effectively to candidates' needs for personal and professional support throughout their doctoral studies, covering a number of key areas including candidates' mental health and wellbeing, and employability.
10. **Preparing for Completion and Examination:** This module focuses on the key steps and issues in completion, submission and examination, to guide supervisors in working with candidates prior to, during, and following these important stages.
11. **Developing your Supervisory Practice:** This module addresses the importance of initial and continuing professional development in doctoral supervision, and shares methods of evaluating and enhancing your supervision style. It also takes a look at the scope and function of senior roles in the leadership and management of doctoral studies.

Platform 2: Research Integrity

Through a national approach concerning training the research community in "Research Integrity" an online training course provided by Epigeum (<https://www.epigeum.com/courses/research/research-integrity-uk-edition/>) is utilised in conjunction with face-to-face workshops. The principal target group is postgraduate students and full-time research staff. All of this cohort are required by their research contracts to complete the training, this is proved to be an effective approach. All new entrants are pre-enrolled by the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) and then sent an explanatory email. In 2020-21 the Institute extended the rollout to all research supervisors, Research Centres and groups. Face to face training is also provided for postgraduates. The Institute's Research Integrity Officer (RIO) has been participating in the VIRT2UE Train-the-Trainer programme (<https://embassy.science/wiki/Guide:Bbe860a3-56a9-45f7-b787-031689729e52>). Over the course of the initial three-year pilot the Institute trained 221 researchers through the Epigeum platform.

Platform 3: The Research Skills Toolkit

The Research Skills Toolkit spans the duration of a research degree with 37 hours of content mapped to key milestones in a researcher's career. Pedagogically co-designed with subject experts to reflect current research practices, the toolkit provides an online training solution with five innovative digital learning programmes and flexible delivery options. The target audience is Master and doctoral students as well as early-stage researchers.

Specific programmes and modules include:

1: Becoming a researcher

- Effective Management of Doctoral and Master's Research
- Intellectual Property in the Research Context
- Working with your supervisors

2: Ethical Research

- Becoming an Ethical Researcher
- Research Ethics in Practice

3: Research Methods

- Undertaking a Literature Review
- Principles of Research Methods
- Research Methods in Practice: Social Sciences
- Research Methods in Practice: Arts & Humanities
- Research Methods in Practice: STEM

4: Disseminating your Research

- Getting Published
- Communicating your Research with Impact

5: Beyond Research

- Career Planning
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Research Infrastructure

The Institute has invested in the provision of dedicated research infrastructure and facilities through the academic schools, library, Research and Graduate Studies Office and regional development centre. As of 23/24 the Institute has approximately 2,750m² of dedicated research space through the provision of laboratories and dedicated research offices. These primarily serve the needs of the Institute's Research Centres and groups across its four academic schools and facilitate the recruitment and supervision of postgraduate research students. More specifically:

- Suite of dedicated research offices for research active academics, career researchers (i.e., postdoctoral fellows), postgraduate research students across the four academic schools

- State of the art laboratories that support the research agendas in the environmental, freshwater, chemistry, bioscience (i.e., photonic imaging suites, generic labs, and tissue culture facilities), renewable energy domains which amounts to close to 2,000m² primarily within the Schools of Health and Science and Engineering.
- Dedicated research capital pieces of equipment (small to large scale): A flavour of these which underpin areas of research within the STEM areas across the Schools of Health, Applied Science and Engineering include, but not limited to:
 - ◆ Scanning laser and ion imaging confocal microscopes, patch clamp rigs for electrophysiology, cell incubators, QPCR
 - ◆ Standard science characterisation equipment (i.e., HPLC, GC, SEM, Spectroscopic instrumentation, elemental analyser)
 - ◆ Electrochemistry suite of equipment (i.e., potentiostats, EQCM)
 - ◆ LIDAR, storage batteries, wind turbine and wave tanks

Current PhD Projects

- Social Inclusion and Diversity
- Non-pharmacological treatment: an exploration of the effects of human-robot interaction
- An investigation in the role and potential of Crowdfunding as a potential funding course for Irish Entrepreneurs
- Cartography and the landed estates of North Louth
- STEAM based interventions in Early Years Education
- Mindfulness in early years' education
- Financial wellbeing into retirement: An investigation into the financial literacy gaps and needs of Irish retirees
- Mixed Methods Evaluation of Trauma-Informed Approach to Care (TIAC) Knowledge and Practices in Midwifery/Perinatal Settings in Ireland
- Festivals Stakeholders Relationships
- The role of Wetlands (Bogs) in maintaining and improving mental health in a cohort of service users in the Cavan and Meath areas
- Developing a toolkit to support digital financial literacy education in older adults
- Exploring older adults' attitudes towards online psychotherapy

- Mixed Methods Evaluation of a Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) Education Programme.
- Adoption and diffusion of technology within the agricultural sector
- Development and Evaluation of reusable learning objects (RLO's) for front line professionals and support staff who support individuals experiencing Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.
- Supporting Sustainable Socio-Economic Development for Wellbeing and Pride of Place
- Education for empowerment-a response to eco-anxiety among young people in Ireland
- Quantifying the potential socioeconomic impacts of nature-based solutions (NbS) on the group water scheme (GWS) sector in Ireland
- A comparative examination of stakeholder engagement in the co-design of nature-based solutions (NbS) within the Irish group water scheme
- Evaluation of the efficacy of an intervention designed to address occupational stressors in home caregivers
- Mixed Methods Evaluation of Trauma-Informed Approach to Care (TIAC) Knowledge and Practices in Midwifery/Perinatal Settings in Ireland.
- In the Eyes of the South: Cinematic Representations of Japan in Contemporary South Korea
- The Past, present and future of fan generated content within League of Ireland football.
- Otherness in Irish Folklore Trilogy
- Abject Isolation: A Contemporary Analysis of Korean Horror Media
- The Use of Site-Specific Irish Theatre in Historical Contexts
- Ordinary Voices through Extraordinary Times': Digitalizing Diaries from the Border Region for an accessible historical resource
- A critical exploration of women's entrepreneurship policy and access to finance on the island of Ireland: A cross border ecosystems approach
- An Analysis of Cultural Life on the Irish Border 1898-1925: Newry
- Intrapreneurship: Delivering Innovation, Creativity and Growth from within for the Irish Hospitality and Tourism Sector - in search of a new paradigm
- Macroinvertebrate community structure and biodiversity change in Lough Feeagh Catchment, Co. Mayo
- Predicting the impact of climate change on Irish tillage farms and developing adaptation strategies
- Autonomous real time sensors for the detection of phosphate and nitrate

- AgCumulate; A study on the accumulation of microplastics in soil and terrestrial ecosystems
- RETINA- Remote Sensing of Global Surface Waters
- Carbon fluxes through the littoral zone of a humic lake (Shallow-C)
- Ensemble modelling of lake evaporation under climate change
- SEQUESTER - Sediment quantities- Understanding Sediment temporal environment records
- MULTISPEC: Ensiling multi-species swards
- Quantification, analysis and environmental distribution of microplastics in Dundalk Bay
- Nanostructured Graphene Electrode Surfaces for Environmental Sensors
- MANTEL project
- Carbon fluxes in the littoral zone of lakes with contrasting alkalinity concentrations
- Croptions
- Predicting the impact of climate change on Irish cereal crops and developing adaptation strategies
- Targeting potassium channels to develop new treatments for erectile dysfunction
- Regulation of purinergic contractions of the murine detrusor
- Redox modulation of inactivating BK α :LINGO2 currents
- Unravelling the molecular mechanism of inactivation of BK channels by the novel regulatory²² subunit - LINGO1
- Role of a fast sodium current in erectile function
- Regulation of Purinergic Contractions of the detrusor
- Does elevated LINGO1 in Parkinson's disease lead to reduced BK channel levels in human brain?
- Neural regulation of urethral smooth muscle
- Targeting M2 muscarinic receptors for treatment of COPD
- Role of intracellular organelles in regulating sparks in bladder myocytes
- Molecular mechanisms underlying LIO1 effects on BK channels
- Role of LINGO1 & BK channels in Tremor
- AI for Athlete Activity Recognition and Analysis (AAARA)
- Framework for Regulatory Compliant Adaptive AI Algorithms – Blockchain

- Developing Interpretable Artificial Intelligence Tool Kit for Detecting Misogynistic Mixed-code Online Content in South Asian Countries
- A Digital Health Platform for Self-Monitoring and Management of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus
- Ambient assisted living for monitoring, evaluation and adapting self-managed home-based health and well-being plans for persons with cardiac conditions
- Digital Medication Management for Older Adults with Multiple Chronic Conditions
- Enabling Self-Management of Social Supports in Frail Older Adults using a Digital Platform
- A Digital Health Program Targeting Physical Activity among Middle-Aged Menopausal Women at Risk of Coronary Heart Disease
- Medical Device Software Testing Framework
- Safe and Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence in Medical Devices – a Regulatory-Friendly Framework
- Adversarial Methods to Mitigate Detrimental Algorithmic Bias
- Developing an adaptive best practice software development operating procedure to include all aspects of the agile development and testing required to achieve regulatory compliance in the medical device industry
- Mobile Security – LERO
- Development of a Distributed and Scalable Testbed for UAVs
- The Application of Evolutionary Computational Methods to Mitigate Detrimental Bias in AI

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13.2 Regional Development Centre

Established in 1989, the RDC was one of the first on-campus business incubator units established on the island and has become a pro-active engine of innovation in the region, building strong relationships and interactions with the community, with entrepreneurs, with SME's and with the various local and State developmental agencies. Closing out this Academic Year 23/24 the RDC has in the year broken the 2,000 entrepreneurs supported threshold with 2164 by the end of the period and incubated over 225 clients with 410 applied research projects and consultancy projects won and managed. As well as supporting indigenous enterprise development the RDC has also been an important vehicle in attracting inward investment to the region. It has achieved this by making available the expertise, facilities and resources of the Institute for the wider benefit of the regional economy through the following range of programmes and activities:

- Research & Development and Technology Transfer
- Entrepreneurial Development Programmes, generic, and stage and sectoral focused, face to face, hybrid and online delivery experience
- Student Enterprise support, entrepreneur development programmes and innovation day facilitation
- Incubation Facilities for Knowledge and Technology-Based Enterprises
- Managing Applied Research with industry, from small <€2k projects to large scale
- Sectoral & Regional Development Initiatives in the areas of innovation for SMEs (Small-Medium Sized Enterprises), female entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship , connected health & wellbeing, energy and renewables, clustering, etc
- Spearheading and Supporting EU and Cross Border Development Initiatives
- Networking with Agencies and Organisations at Regional, National and International Level

The success of the activity emanating out of the RDC has been such that that the original 500m² facility has been extended on three occasions, 500m² added in 1992 800m² in 1997 and a further 750 m² in 2005 to total 2550 m² inclusive of meeting and common areas. Office and lab space totals 1330 m². The RDC currently sits at design stage completion for an additional circa 1110m² extension to its facility (as of September 2022) however while remaining a focus has not been able to secure the shortfall funding to complete the project to date.

The RDC works closely with the Local Enterprise Offices of Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan supporting them as members of their respective project Evaluation Committees and partnering across national and international projects were appropriate. The RDC at DkIT were also a founding member of various industry networks and clustering initiatives in the region and continue to play an active role such as the Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster initiative and the Dundalk Chamber Skillnet currently playing an active role on steering /advisory committees. During the period the RDC also co-founded the ECO Wind Cluster an industry lead cluster of companies across the value chain in offshore wind sector. These networks will be key avenues and pipelines of engagement for DkIT.

A major success during the period was the awarding of the DigiBio Health Innovators Programme with circa €7M for 6 years awarded to DkIT in a heavily contested competitive call from Enterprise Ireland. The RDC have also been active in the period with applications across various Investment Areas in the PEACE+ funding calls.

Staff of the RDC currently hold a number of voluntary directorships supporting economic development in the region from innovation hubs to financial support entities for businesses, to the Cross Border Partnership Employment Services Steering committee (representing IBEC), and were co-opted as a member of the Drogheda Implementation Board economic development sub group and co-opted onto board membership of the recently established Irish Knowledge Transfer Association (IKTA).

The RDC have a key membership of the steering and implementation committee in the development of the North East Regional Enterprise Plan 2021- 2024 (extended for an addition year to end of 2025), including chairing the SME Ecosystem development subgroup.

Incubation

The academic year 2023/24 commenced with the RDC in a good position with occupancy of close to 100%. This level continued for most of the year dropping slightly as Sunday and Oriel Wind exited the Centre but we also welcomed Finotor to the Centre and Perspectives Ireland will join in October 2024.

Sunday was in situ for a number of years starting off as a digital media offering for Horse Racing owners and enthusiasts. A sustainable business model proved difficult to find and the founder changed and tried a number of different approaches. Having built a platform that worked he then tried to widened the net and target other sports. He had some success with this and also negotiated a deal that would allow Sunday to be part of a cluster of companies providing fan engagement services to a football club in the UK but he would run out of funding before it was to be realised. The founder started to provide consultancy services and exited the Centre to save on costs.

Oriel Wind Farm had returned to the Centre having been in-situ in the early days of designing their off-shore wind electricity generating wind farm for Dundalk Bay back in the early 00's. As the project neared completion, they took an office in the Centre to act as a public consultation and front office for the company which is now based in County Dublin and Belgium. There is a new round of licences to be announced by the State in November 2024 and they are hopeful their bid will be successful.

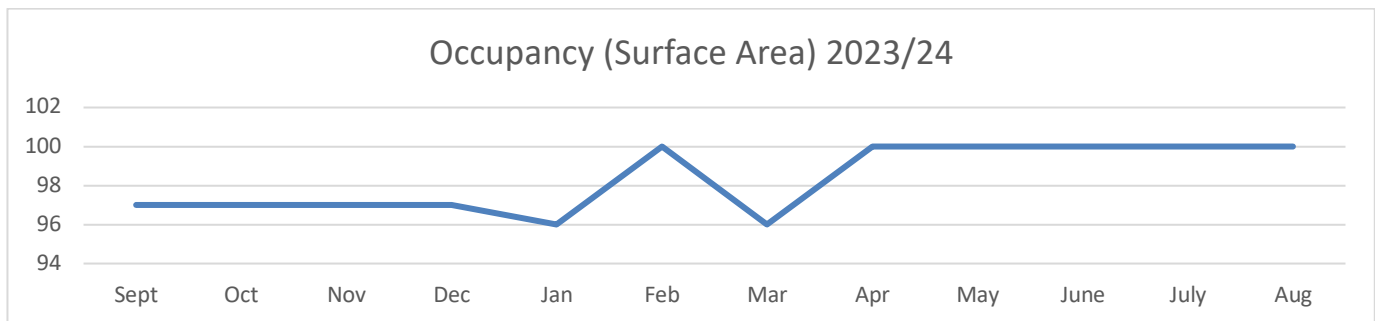
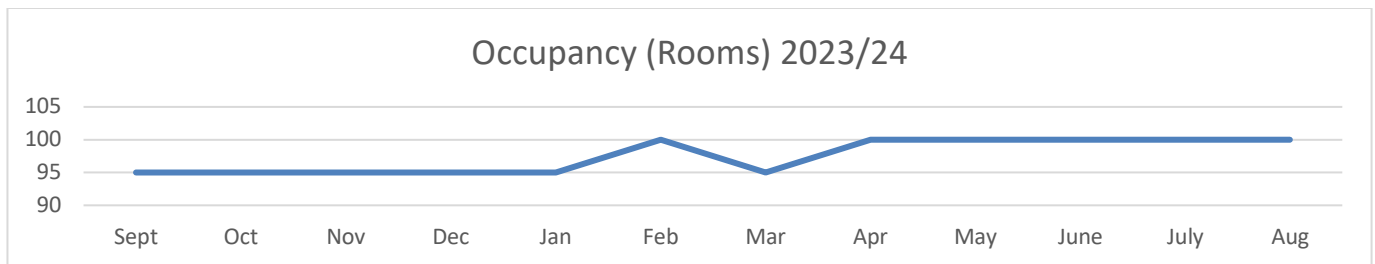
One office was taken up by Finotor a fintech company developing software as a service solution for SMEs. The founders are French nationals who have strong links to Ireland and have operated other businesses in Ireland which provided a ready made client base for the new platform. We introduced them to Louth LEO and they successfully received grant support to help expand their employee numbers. Over the period they regularly have circa 6 employees in the office and have also had interns from French Universities and are engaging with careers in respect of Careers Fairs and Work Placements.

Perspectives Ireland a female led business operated by Co-Founder Dr Ciara McEnteggart applied for incubation and will take up an office in October 2024. Ciara had previously completed the New Frontiers Programme and is growing an international client base in the US for their PBBT Platform and services (Process Based Behavioural Therapy) which were developed from Ciara's PhD research. Perspectives Ireland are also clients of dConnect and the Digital Health and Well-being Cluster.

While occupancy in the Centre remains, high there is a noticeable drop in the number of enquiries for incubation space. This may be in part due to us not actively promoting the Centre due to full occupancy but it may also be an early indicator of the marketplace demand. Speaking with other centres in the region most are close to full occupancy also.

The number of tenant employees using the offices on a daily basis has grown over the past 12 months. Although some days can be fairly quiet (usually Monday and/or Friday) Speaking with the founders it appears that the companies are still offering hybrid working to employees. This has been necessary for a couple of companies as they seek to attract workers. For others there was no drop of productivity due to remote work and therefore this move is seen to be a benefit for employees.

Some companies demand their employees to be on site all days. Due in part to inexperienced workforce and rapid growth where the CEO is trying to build a team and upskill staff at the same time. Founders are also finding it difficult to find employees due to close to full employment conditions in the State.



We report occupancy in units and surface area. This is useful as it shows whether we expanded or reduced the surface area of the centre dedicated to incubation due to demand or on-boarding of new support programmes. In 2022/23 we saw an overall growth of 8% in the space offered to incubation clients. We did forecast a potential occupancy drop to about 75% which didn't materialise as any vacant office was quickly filled. However, we expect a few more businesses to exit over the coming years (Overhaul/Walls/Digital Design/GlanMor Tech) as businesses start to outgrow the centre, corporate acquisition or in the case of Walls, move to their own regional hub.

An overview of the companies and current headcount is given below:

<i>Total no. of client companies</i>	13
<i>Total no. employed at Incubator</i>	105
<i>Total space occupied (m²)</i>	651

Target Occupancy (Average) for the year = 80% Actual was 98%

As can be seen above there is demand for the incubation office space in the Centre. We have adopted a balanced approach to the promotion of the centre so as to not over sell our offering, i.e. if we are full it doesn't make too much sense to promote office space therefore disappointing potential clients. As the year ends, we have a small pipeline which we are managing and keeping in touch with and hope that when a client exits the Centre we have someone to replace them. One of our female founder companies from New Frontiers will join the Centre in October 2024. Thrive and New Frontiers Programmes allows us to manage expectations while promoting the centre. Currently there are an additional 2 companies in the pipeline although the acid test as to how real their need is, is when another unit becomes available.

‘Hotdesk/ Concept’ Space

The Centre offers hotdesking space to start-ups on the New Frontiers Programme and also to Spin Ins. This provides a mechanism to create and maintain a pipeline into incubation proper. Over the past few years, a number of NFP businesses have used hotdesking to house DkIT students on placement who have been assigned to work with them. This has proven very beneficial to the start-ups and also animates the unit and Centre. 2023/24 saw a number of our tenant companies use this space to house their work placement students. Currently the hot-desking/co-working room accommodates 5 desks.

An overview of the companies currently using Hotdesking, excluding New Frontiers Programme participants, is given below. Note: New Frontiers Programme participants use this space mostly pre and post programme training days.

Total number	6
Space occupied (m ²)	23

Three companies left the Centre during the 2023/24 academic year.

Soft support Activities

The RDC provides a range of soft support activities for its clientele (internal and external) these include:

- Developmental Workshops
- Networking events
- Seminars
- Informational events (to support external agencies)
- Promotional events (promoting the work of the RDC and DkIT)
- Judging Panel members for competitions - Louth Business Awards, student pitches, etc.

A number of networking/information events were held during the period such as an IP Information event, AI event delivered by dConnect for the RDC, etc. The RDC continued to be represented on the judging panel for the Louth Student Enterprise Awards competition for Louth LEO during enterprise week. It also promoted Enterprise Ireland’s Student entrepreneurship awards in DkIT.

The RDC also supported students during the period as part of the Start for Futures programme, providing mentoring, advice and incubation supports. This is a pan Europe project funded by the EU and is headed up in DkIT by Colette Henry from the School of Business and Humanities. This programme supports students to develop business ideas into businesses using mentors from across the globe. Ultimately it is hoped that successful start-ups join the incubators to grow their businesses. The themes to date have focused on manufacturing and circular economy start-ups. GoPlugable started out on this programme founded by students on the MBS in Marketing & Entrepreneurship and then joined the New Frontiers Programme which was completed in Dec 2023. 66 student entrepreneurs were supported by the RDC in 2023/24 (61 supported under the EIT iDays event organised by colleagues in dConnect and the Cluster Initiative) and the balance via the SFF and were international teams in virtual incubation as part of develop and co-create stage.

Giggin Policy Programme

The RDC was a partner on this EU funded programme along with Meath CoCo and Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency in Ireland along with other partners in the Netherlands, Spain and Lithuania. The programme set out to investigate the Gig Economy and to develop a framework for organisations to include youth (<26 year olds) in policy making. Aiming to ensure youth understand the changing landscape of work due to gig work style contracts and implications for pension, social welfare and other aspects of working in this sector. It also aimed to give youth a voice in how policy makers legislate for this sector in the future.

The RDC was tasked with impact evaluation of the programme interventions, workshops and training provided to youth and stakeholders. This programme was completed in January 2024 when the final impact evaluation was submitted. It is hoped that the connections and relationships made with the different partner organisations will lead to further collaborations in the future and already the RDC was invited to partner on a proposal led by the Learning Hub in the Netherlands based on the Hack Lab concept. Income from the programme to the RDC was modest but does provide opportunities beyond cash income.

New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme

The New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme is a national programme funded by Enterprise Ireland and has been delivered by DkIT in collaboration with DCU since 2012. Consisting of three phases participants determine whether there is commercial opportunity in their idea during Phase 1, develop a business plan and business structures during Phase 2 and prepare for scaling sales during Phase 3. During the academic year recruited for and ran two phase 1 and one phase 2 programmes. In total 48 participants took part in the different phases. A number of participants had significant successes during the period, raising funding, securing significant clients and one close to being acquired.

- DkIT and University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC) have planned virtual mentoring and pitching sessions for early-stage businesses and student entrepreneurs. The objective is that a DkIT panel would review the UNCC business proposals and provide a European focus with feedback and cultural nuances with UNCC returning the favour with DkIT based businesses/student ideas. Both DkIT with the Regional Development Centre and UNCC with the Charlotte Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation have college based incubation centres for supporting businesses within the community and student population. This took place in September 2023 when students return to both campuses. The aim of this is to get students and businesses in both UNCC and DkIT to have an international outlook earlier in their respective business development cycles.
- A Venture Analyst from a Charlotte based Venture Capital (and Accelerator) firm, who was a fellow participant on YTIIL with David, had visited DkIT in July'23 to visit the North East and gain an understanding of the start-up ecosystem with a view to providing American focused feedback and/or connections into the American StartUp eco-system. He also returned in this academic year in September for another round of business reviews with NFP participants.
- Funding was secured from EI from the programmes marketing budget to replace artworks and for display cabinets (purchased) in the Centre with products and materials from New Frontiers Programme Participants and Incubation Centre companies.

Athena STEM (Thrive4Women) programme

Funding was received for a three-year period was received under BEDF for a female entrepreneur and management capability programme. The Programme manager, Lavina McGahon, was recruited and started in April 2021. The programme supports female entrepreneurs in the North East to launch their businesses, supports female work returners and managers who wish to enter STEM businesses at management level. A total of 35 women participated in the Thrive Innovate and Thrive Execute programmes in the academic year. The Thrive Network continued to grow during the year. The programme was announced as Irish National Winner for Promoting Entrepreneurial Spirit for the European Enterprise Promotion Awards and Lavina attended the European final in Bilboa, Spain in November 2023 where the programme received a mention. Unfortunately, funding for the programme ended and the main focus moved to identifying future funding opportunities which took many routes and will continue to do so in the 2024/25 academic year.

Boyne Innovate Programme

The RDC won a publicly tendered contract from Louth County Council following a tender process to deliver three pre-accelerator programmes in the greater Drogheda area. The target is to recruit between 6 and 10 participants on each programme. The first programme ran in May and June 2024 following a very short recruitment window due to delays awarding the contract. 6 Participants were recruited with a number deferring to the Autumn. In the end 5 completed the programme and the feedback was very complimentary. It is expected that at least 2 participants will apply for the New Frontiers Programme Phase 2 in 2024/25 academic year. The second programme is in development with ongoing recruitment in the period with a target start date in October 2024. These programmes and initiatives resulted in the RDC supporting 159 entrepreneurs during the academic year.

External Hire activities

The Centre also manages the rental of DkIT facilities to external organisations, these range from individuals, for and not-profit, local, regional and national organisations. During 2023/24 academic year the Institute received a number of enquires and repeat bookings. Some long-term clients have moved their offerings to blended and so did not return to DkIT. However, we did support a TV programme, a language company summer school, a HSE event in October and a Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Employment event in September. For the time involved in managing these events and requests, income is modest.

Other initiatives

The Incubation Centre was also involved in a number of funding applications from various funders national and EU including:

- CrossEUniverse (with the School of Business - Unsuccessful),
- Student INC, led by MTU (HEA decision pending)
- Responsible Entrepreneurship led by DkIT (HEA decision pending)
- Hack Lab (mentioned above pending)

The Incubation Centre Manager sits on the Louth LEO EVAC for Grant approvals and attended all EVAC meetings in 2023/24. He also sat on the Board of Directors for Ardee Business Park but resigned during the academic year and another DkIT employee is on the Board.

Technology Transfer (TT) and Applied Research Activity

The TTO works with the various research centres, schools and other departments to develop, review and negotiate various agreements with external parties. In November 2023 DkIT recruited to replace the TTO Manager role that was vacant from March 2023. During that period the TTO managed:

- 1 x Comms Fund for Veri-Cert
- 1 xComms Fund Feasibility DPIA
- 2 x Innovation Partnership Feasibility study for Green Rebel and 1 for Ethel Farm
- 1x IntertradeIreland Business Explorer-Explore project, Predator.
- 3 x IntertradeIreland Innovation Boost projects Atlas, ISX4 and PCD.
- The TTO during this period facilitated 18 Innovation Voucher projects being initiated with SMEs .

During this time the TTO office supported 30 IV consultations and 3 IP advice with Companies through out the year. The TTO worked with various research centres schools and departments to review and negotiate various agreements. The TTO undertook an extensive audit with the Research Centre Regulated Software. Assessing the results from the audit the TTO has identified a number of opportunities for further exploration and support as well as an opportunity to facilitate more awareness of commercialisation and IP knowledge with staff and students, the TTO is developing immersive training on IP and commercialization for the RC as a result of this audit. During the period the TTO was award Knowledge Transfer Ireland “KT Assist” funding of €20k per annum for 2 years to support the TTO activities. In development are a number of Showcase events and Inhouse IP/commercialisation training workshops. Additional activities include:

- 1X NDA/CDA signed with StatSports and RSRC
- 1 x NDA/CDA Berand and SMRC
- 1X Research Evaluation Agreement with Netwell CASALA/TCD and Caredoc.
- 1 Eval licence for Uni of Galway re NetwellCASALA/TCD access to evaluate the IP on small scale research project
- 1x IDF with Kieran Nolan VR Super Gun IDF 2024001
- 1x IDF signed with Ceara Treacy DPIA IDF 2023001
- 1X Institutional Agreement between DKIT ,RCSI,DCU,Tyndall,TCD [Digo Bio]
- 1x letter Of Agreement between DKIT and RCSI, and Centric Health
- 1X Institutional Agreement DKIT and RCSI.

The Innovation Partnership Programme (multi company) EI IPP IP 2023 1050 that was awarded in the previous AY period for a Co-Botics project was cancelled as two of the 6 companies changed their focus, citing the length of time that had occurred and the change in the strategy of the company as the rationale. The TTO refocused on a number of the companies to look at Innovation Voucher opportunities.

The TTO arranged for Intellectual Property Office of Ireland to present a workshop in the DKIT on IP and Commercialization in April 2024. The CREATE-DKIT project was successful in the period that includes a Corporate Partnership Officer resource who has been recruited and reports into the TTO Manager.

DigiBio Healthtech Innovation Programme

In January 2024, a DkIT-led partnership with RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences (core partner), Dublin City University, Trinity College Dublin, and Tyndall National Institute successfully secured €7M in funding to develop and operate the DigiBio Healthtech Innovation programme over the next 6 years. This initiative is supported under the Innovators' Initiative Programme, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027. The programme was officially launched at DkIT with circa 100 delegates in attendance on May 21st by EU Commissioner Mairead McGuinness, the DkIT President Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan, and Enterprise Ireland's Head of Research & Innovation Marina Donohue.

The primary objective of programme is to nurture the next generation of healthtech innovators and entrepreneurs in Ireland. This hands-on, "learn by doing" programme is structured around the Stanford bio-design needs innovation methodology and lean start-up approaches with programme delivery a collaboration between the RDC DigiBio team and the School of Informatics and Creative Arts. Participants receive innovation training, mentorship, and a 2-month immersion period in a healthcare environment to identify commercially viable opportunities. Working in multidisciplinary teams, participants identify, validate, and prioritise healthcare needs, identify solutions to address those needs and develop viable business propositions to bring those solutions to market.

The NQF level 9 post graduate programme is aimed at high-calibre individuals with significant industry experience from diverse backgrounds, including clinical, commercial, financial, entrepreneurial, and technical fields. To enable full-time commitment, participants receive a scholarship of €38k, with academic fees fully funded. Following a highly competitive recruitment and rigorous assessment process, the first intake of 12 participants was selected in July 2024, with the first programme commencing on September 3rd. The programme is supported by a dedicated team comprising a Programme Director, Programme Operations Manager, Clinical Immersion Programme Manager, and Programme Administrator.

For more information on the programme see www.digibio.ie

DkIT Connect DAC

Trading as dConnect, dConnect Digital Health Innovation Hub launched in May 2021 and was 80% funded by Enterprise Ireland through the Regional Enterprise Development Fund, with the remaining funding provided by Louth County Council, Dundalk Enterprise Development Company, Servisource Healthcare, Dundalk CREDIT Union, the Louth Enterprise Fund and the Dundalk Institute of Technology.

The Enterprise Ireland funding of dConnect concluded in May 2024, and it is now operating under its own budget. Based at DkIT's RDC, the dConnect team has reduced from a team of three to one full time staff member – an Innovation and Research Project Manager, who now reports directly to the manager of the Connected Health & Wellbeing Cluster. The CHW cluster and dConnect have worked closely together over the past three years, especially on larger projects, and there is a natural alignment in their strategic priorities. dConnect's mission is to stimulate and foster innovation in Digital Health by collaborating with, and connecting, businesses, healthcare providers, universities, patient groups and society to support the development of digital solutions to address our growing healthcare needs. dConnect supports early-stage companies by providing access to education, expertise and its extensive network, it provides larger businesses and investors with exposure to leading-edge innovation and training and supports research organisations to successfully commercialize their research.

dConnect runs various start-up and industry training programmes on digital health innovation, hosts regular workshops and events, provides mentoring and consultancy support and has the in-house capability to develop software prototypes and solutions for clients. During the 2023/24 Academic Year, dConnect's key activities included the following:

- 9 collaborative engagements and proposals, with 28 partners.
- Hosting 10 events, seminars & workshops with 267 attendees.
- 20 start-up and founder mentor sessions.
- Delivering the EIT Health student innovation programme (I-Days). This was the second year of the programme, where 65 students tackled a health challenge (dementia) over 1.5 days of Design Thinking workshops. The winning team pitched at the European final in Barcelona.
- Co-hosted the “Innovative Synergies: Integrating Data and Collaboration in Healthcare” Conference” in Dundalk in June 2024 in partnership with the CHW Cluster, EIT Health, InterTrade Ireland and HIRANI. This is the second of a series of planned annual digital health conferences at DkIT.
- Launched a Digital Health Industry Innovation Programme on behalf of Skillnet Connected Health in August 2023. This was a 5 month needs-led innovation programme for SMEs and multinational companies – three companies participated in the pilot programme. The 2nd iteration of the programme will commence in December 2024.

The key services offered by dConnect include:

- Hosting Programmes & Events
 - ◆ eHealth Embark digital health start-up programme
 - ◆ Digital Health Industry Innovation Programme
 - ◆ EIT Health I-Day's student programme
 - ◆ Regular webinars & events

- Business Mentoring and Consulting
 - ◆ Market Research studies
 - ◆ Data privacy strategies
 - ◆ Path-to-Market strategy
 - ◆ Regulatory pathways
 - ◆ Investor readiness
 - ◆ Cybersecurity considerations
- Technology Guidance and Prototyping
 - ◆ Proof of concept development
 - ◆ Wire-framing & User interface (UI) development
 - ◆ User testing
 - ◆ Backend application development
 - ◆ Technical Training
- Access to Expertise
 - ◆ Technology
 - ◆ Clinical / Healthcare providers
 - ◆ Regulatory
 - ◆ Industry
 - ◆ Investment

Connected Health & Wellbeing Cluster (Regional Technology Cluster Fund)

In 2019/20, DkIT successfully applied to the Regional Technology Clustering Fund, and was awarded €350,072, to create a Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster. The Education and Outreach Manager, Breannan Casey, was appointed in June 2021 on a three-year contract which has been extended by an additional year of RTCF Funding. A Stream 2 Operational Workplan was created in early 2022 with a focus on six aligned 'Strategic Pillars' which support collaboration and learning across the Pillars. These pillars are:

1. Innovation, Promotion & Collaboration
2. Internationalisation
3. Education, Skills, Training & Development

4. Regulatory, Cybersecurity & Interoperability
5. Sustainable HealthTech
6. Personalised Health Monitoring including SportsTech & Wearables

The Cluster has solidified its place in Ireland's health ecosystem during the past year, and membership has increased from 43 to over 60 members. We believe that we have made significant progress and created a strong base for developing an Internationally-recognised Cluster by the end of the RTCF Stream 2 (year four of funding) which will help to develop innovation and productivity in the digital health sector, and further DkIT's objective to be a regional leader in digital health, alongside our Research centres and other supports.

Sample 'Industry' members of the Cluster currently includes xWave Technologies, Wellola, Zendra Health, STATSports Group, Nova Leah. Takeda, Isaac Care. acGT Vector, Salaso, AWS, Heart Rhytym Ireland, and OpaMind. Public bodies (academia / research, healthcare, and enterprise support) members include Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Tallaght Hospital, Lourdes Hospital Drogheda, RCSI, Regulated Software Research Centre, Netwell Casala Research centre, Smooth Muscle Research Centre, HSE, and the dConnect Digital Health Innovation Hub.

Thomas Coleman, CEO of Zendra Health was appointed as (voluntary) Chairperson in February 2023, and a Steering group of health stakeholders was formed in April 2024. Progress during the 2023 /2024 academic year included:

- We held our second 'Dundalk' EIT Health I-Days (Innovation) in October 2023, in partnership with dConnect, DKIT's academic departments, and members of the Cluster including the Netwell CASALA Research Centre and the Regulated Software Research Centre (RSRC). 65 multi-disciplinary students from DKIT created solutions to Health Challenges over one and a half days, using the Design Thinking process. I-Days promote health innovation among university students through dozens of one-day and two-day programmes held in academic institutions around Europe. Students from all academic areas receive an introduction to practical health innovation tools and compete in teams to tackle real-life health challenges. The winning Dundalk team, 'Care Connect' developed an App for Dementia and attended the Winners' Event in Barcelona where they competed against winning teams from 25 Universities and received additional feedback on their idea. EIT Health provided funding of €8000 in 2023, and will support two more years of Dundalk I-Days.
- Collaborating with other EU Digital Health Clusters has continued. We are a Cluster member of Community Members & Partners – NoBoCap . Our manager, Breannán Casey, presented on 'Building an Irish Health Cluster & Ecosystem' at the Baltic Life Sciences Conference at Vilnius, Lithuania, in September 2023.
- A core pillar is 'Internationalisation', and we had our third 'Cluster to Cluster' Huddle with the UK Northwest Healthtec Cluster in April 2024, where our members were able to discuss collaborative opportunities with members from potential UK customers and partners.
- We hosted an Enterprise Ireland delegation from South East Asia / Australia / New Zealand to DkIT in May 2024, where attendees heard presentation from Research Centres at DkIT, and also had one-one-one meetings with Cluster members. The Cluster also co-hosted a C-suite delegation of healthcare professionals from Belgium to Dublin in October 2023.

- June 2024 also saw us co-host our second annual conference, “Innovative Synergies: Integrating Data and Collaboration in Healthcare” partnership with the CHW Cluster, EIT Health, InterTrade Ireland, and HIRANI. Attendees discussed our respective health systems, best practise activity, potential collaborations, and the future of data in health, Over 100 attendees at CHW Cluster's 'Data & Collaboration' Conference - Connected Health and Wellbeing
- In September 2023, with funding from InterTradeIreland, we supported 25 organisations to participate in our inaugural ‘AI for Health’ training programme which encouraged collaboration across all stakeholders on the island of Ireland. The programme is a partnership with the Data Value Hub in Monaghan and the Data Innovation Hub in Armagh. The 2nd programme, with €100,000 funding from InterTrade Ireland, will commence in October 2024 with more in-depth AI support for 10 companies.
- Marketing – Our monthly ezine is distributed to over 280 subscribers (increased from 215), and our LinkedIn profile has over 743 followers (increased from 500). Our programme activities have featured in a number of online and print publications over the past year including the Enterprise Ireland newsletter. We had a DKIT Digital Health stand at the Future Health Summit in Dublin in May 2024 alongside dConnect and the relevant DkIT research centres, and mentored the eight finalists in the Startup awards on their pitch to judges. The ongoing FDI and SME partnership between two of our members (IBM and Heart Rhythym Ireland) was highlighted in a promotional video from IBM, Cluster members HRI and IBM collaborate to accelerate cardiac implant monitoring platform - Connected Health and Wellbeing (chwcluster.ie) . The manager of the Cluster also sits on the ‘Digital’ working group of the NorthEast Action Plan.
- We organised upskilling, networking, and training Events including ‘Healthtech Regulations for SMEs’, ‘AI In Health’ Webinars, and online monthly members’ meetings where attendees access support and advice from each other.

CREDIT Technology Gateway

CREDIT Technical Gateway provides a range of applied research and innovative solutions to industry under the following themes (revised themes for 2023-2029 programme):

- Wind and Distributed Energy
- Zero Carbon and Energy Optimisation
- Integrated Energy

The EI Technology Gateway programme has secured EU co-funding 2023-2029. The new programme officially [launched in June](#) 2023.

The TG is overseen by a mandatory Industry Steering Committee who meet quarterly following a consultation process. The make-up of the current committee is as follows: The TG is also overseen by an internal Executive Steering committee and also meets quarterly.

In terms of performance the CREDIT TG has targets and KPIs as per its grant agreement with Enterprise Ireland (2023-2029), the table below outlines what has been achieved in this period Sept 2023 – August 2024

Category		El Targets: Jan - Dec 2024	Achieved Sept 23-Aug 24
Projects >€1.5k <€5K		8	12
Projects >€5k <€10K		20	18
Projects >€10k -		2	0
Total Projects		30	30
Project Value		€180k	€119,850
Industry Contribution		€70k	€36,850
<p>El IV Projects >€5k <€10K Clare Engineering; Rivendell; Kaizen; Europlan; Foxden; CJ Research; Sillis Green; Keystone/Supersoil; Safety First; iBL; Ethel Farm; Galettech; C2K; Green Rebel</p> <p>INI IV Projects >€5k <€10k: Equipped NI; Boom Clap</p> <p>El IPP Feasibility >€5k <€10k: Green Rebel; Ethel Farm</p> <p>ITI Projects >€10k: ITI BOOST Application: Northern Crushers; Atlas 4 Industry; ISX4; PCD</p> <p>ITI BOOST Explore: Predator Trailers</p> <p>Direct – Training etc: BD Ireland; Glen Dimplex; EZSVS; Bord na Mona; Kilsaran Precast; ISCT 1&2</p>			

Ongoing Projects Sept 2023	Total No.
No of projects > €1.5k	0
No of projects > €5k;	9
No of projects > €10k	3
Total € value of projects	€141k
Total Industry Contribution	€92k
Enterprise Ireland Clients	5

Supplement

- Two EI 2021 Capital grants namely the LiDAR and HASS/HALT are in process . The procurement process commenced during in Q4 2022 and delivery of items was successfully completed Q4 2023.
- The Galion is undergoing trials and configuration set up on campus adjacent to the wind turbine throughout Q1 & Q2 2024.
- Galion LiDAR training for internal staff and external industry stakeholders is scheduled in September 2024. This is a commercial metric for the Gateway for external industry stakeholders (Galetech, NME and Re-Tech)
- HALT HASS has been moved to semi-permanent location at PJ Carrols where integrated compressed air services and electrical support have been procured. Commissioning and training due Q3/4 2024.
- Dr Ray Byrne through CREDIT TG has been successful through the EI Capital Call 2023 in securing funding for a further range of nacelle and ground mounted LiDAR to complement the existing family of LiDAR product. This has been successfully procured and await delivery Q3/Q4 2024.
- EI Innovation Vouchers level of funding has been increased to 10k from 5k
- 3 prominent CREDIT TG Case Studies have been published by Enterprise Ireland: CJ Research, Kaizen Energy and Supersoil
- ECO Wind Cluster set up with CREDIT TG on steering committee

DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme

DkIT's CPP provides a strategic and structured framework for the development of sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships with external organisations in such areas as new Continuous Professional Development programme development, student placements, research, sponsorship, staff placement, student/staff mentoring and advisory boards. Through the CREATE-DKIT (TU RISE) funding the project has a dedicated resource in a Corporate Partnership Office to support the RDC and Wider DkIT to facilitate the development of engagement by DkIT with a focus on sectors and sectoral clusters of strategic importance to the region including Identify and respond to future skills needs within prioritised sectors, support for increased research and innovation engagement and projects and support to the careers and employability centre to enhance engagement with sectors and cluster that helps the student learning experience.

A DkIT Corporate Partnership Framework has been developed and the development of the CPP has been acknowledged as a strategic objective in the DkIT Strategic Plan. Significant progress has been made in leading and developing a cluster network in Connected Health and Wellbeing including innovation centre infrastructure and programme support funding received through the Regional Enterprise Development Fund that has commenced in late 2020 and the Regional Technology Clustering Fund. This academic year has also seen the Connected Health & Wellbeing cluster initiative receiving project funding for an additional 2-year extension.

DkIT are also a partner in the ATU led BORMAC border-based manufacturing companies cluster. DkITs Head of Innovation & Business Development has also been an integral part of the North East Regional Enterprise plan (NEREP) 2021-24 development led by the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation that is developing

strategic objectives to focus on industry clustering, and chairs the SME Ecosystem subgroup. DETE has extended the NEREP remit out by an additional year to 2025.

14. Campus Developments



North and South Building and STEM Extension

DkIT submitted its response to the *Review of Capital Requirements in Higher Education Institutions at the end of January 2017*. DkIT prioritised the urgent requirement to modernise and upgrade the original 1970s building stock (principally the North and South buildings with an area of approximately 16,000m²). This project involves the replacement of the roof membrane, glazing, external panels, building services, electrical and ICT infrastructure and the energy/insulation upgrading to meet optimum BER requirements. In addition, there is an urgent need to provide state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment. In May 2018, The Institute provided a detailed Multi-Criteria Analysis Report to the HEA in further consideration of the application for capital funding for the refurbishment project. In September 2018, the Institute secured funding of €18,469,525 for the project. Update 2023/2024 is as follows:

- Enabling works completed.
- Planning permission granted.
- The STEM extension was completed by end of August 2023.
- North Building Roof and Boiler House was completed in September 2024.

Apprenticeship Expansion at P J Carrolls

During the period May-August 2023, the Institute was engaged in the development of a €13.276million funding submission for the expansion of craft and higher provision apprenticeship under the HEA's TSSFP Call. The Institute was awarded this funding in 2024.

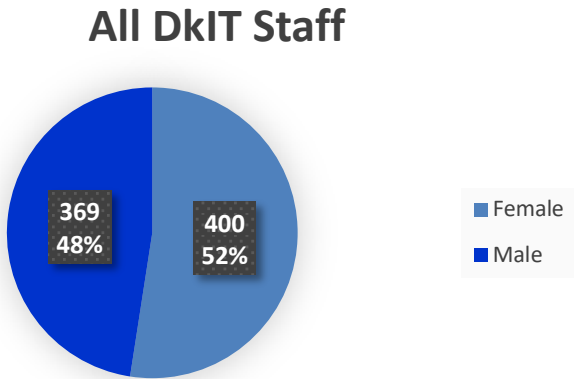
The Institute completed the refurbishment of the Faulkner Hall roof, drawing offices, staff common room and link corridor funded via the Devolved Grant 2023/2024.

DkIT, in its four-year Strategic Plan 2024-2028, has set out its commitment to DkIT becoming a sustainable campus in all its dimensions. DkIT updated its Climate Action Roadmap 2024. This Roadmap demonstrates how DkIT will achieve emissions reductions to 2030. As a public sector organisation DkIT has two targets under CAP21 focused on energy: • Target 1 Decarbonisation: To reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from energy by 51% by 2030 • Target 2 Energy Efficiency: To improve energy efficiency to 50% by 2030. The Institute will seek to

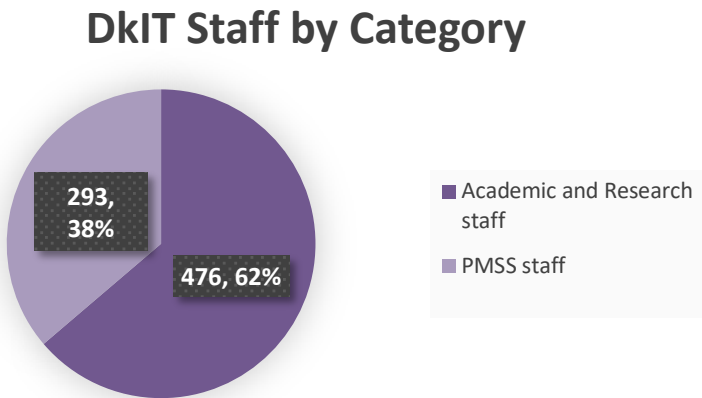
support sustainable development and embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals across its activities to generate demonstrable impact. In this regard, DkIT is committed to be a leader in the development of a wholistic approach in including all aspects of sustainability. In June 2024, the Institute developed and approved its Sustainability Policy to include its terms of reference and structure.

15.EDI & HR

The number of staff is 769, of which females comprised 52%. (IOT average 52%)

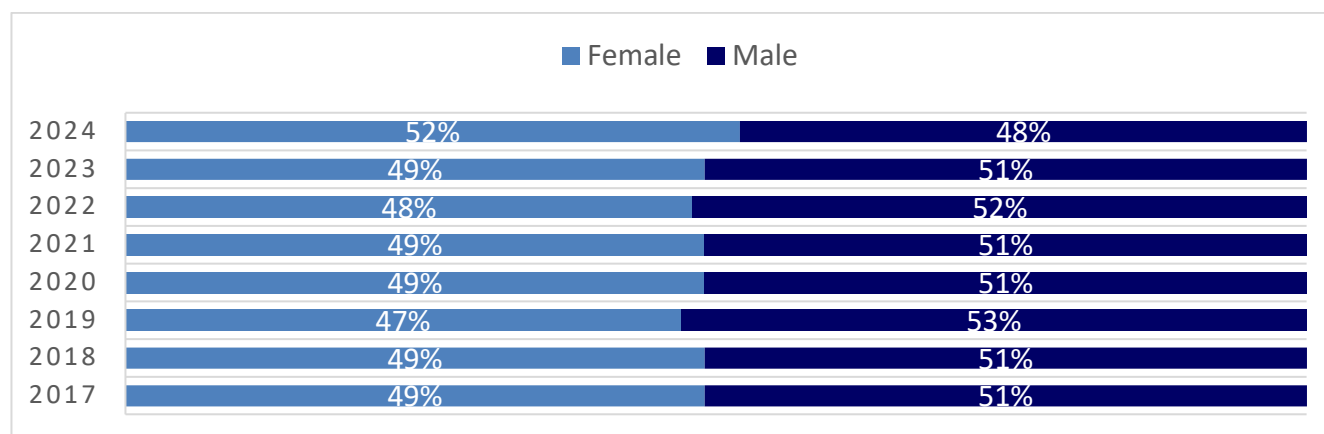


Academic & Research Staff account for 62% of all staff.

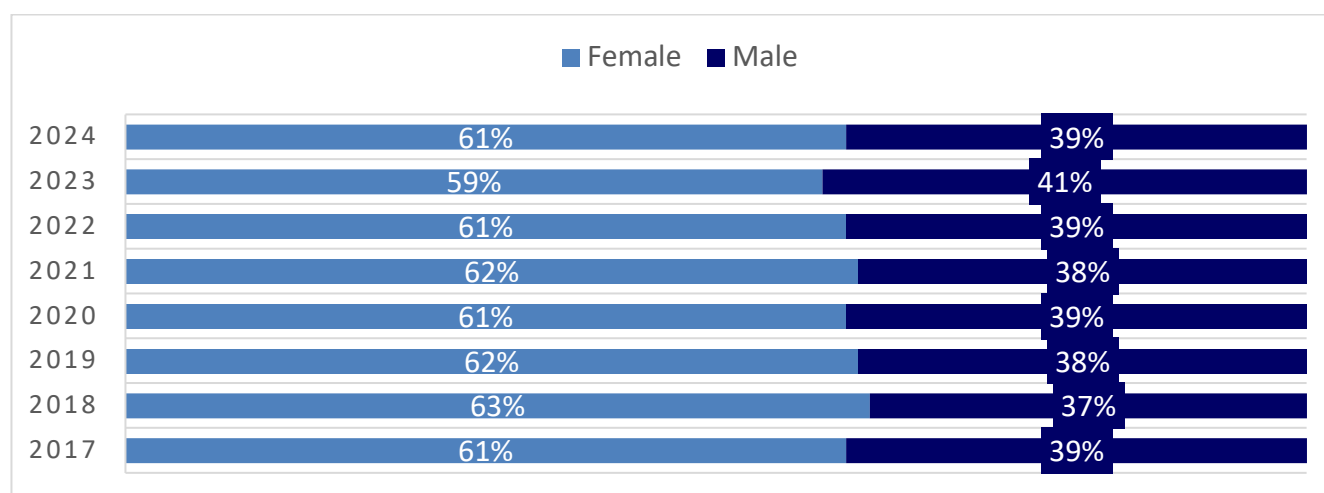


The Institute maintained strong gender balance across both academic and research staff and professional, management and support staff (PMSS) during 2024:

Academic & Research Staff:



PMSS:



DkIT continues to actively promote the values of EDI in the culture, behaviours, interactions, and operations in the delivery of its remit.

DkIT were initially awarded an Athena Swan Bronze accreditation 2021, this award was successfully renewed in 2024. The School of Engineering also hold an Athena Swan Bronze accreditation.

Highlights from 2023/2024 include:

- DkIT Loves STEM Roadshows: **470 female students**.
- DkIT STEM Taster Day on Campus: **75 female students**

The 2023 International Women's Day focused on women in Engineering celebrating the School of Engineering Bronze accreditation.

DkIT has established two Working Groups – A Race Equality Working Group and a College of Sanctuary Working Group.

Dr Fiona Lawless, HoD in the SciCA received her Aurora accreditation in March 2024 and is now the Aurora Champion for DkIT. Aurora training is available to all staff.

During the Diversity week 2023, DkIT officially signed the HEA Anti-Racism Principles

Link to EDI page: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Dundalk institute of Technology / About DkIT / DkIT - Dundalk Institute of Technology](#)

16. Irish Language Scheme



Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) continues to advance the implementation of its Irish Language Scheme¹, which ensures alignment with the provisions of the Official Languages (Amendments) Act 2021. This report outlines the progress and key developments made between 1st September 2023 and 31st August 2024, reaffirming the institute's dedication to promoting the Irish language within its operations.

The function of the Irish Language Scheme within Ireland's Public and Civil Service is to embed the Official Languages Act (2003/2021) into the daily operations of public bodies. For DkIT, this scheme builds on previous language schemes (2010-2013; 2014-2017; 2018-2021), striving to enhance engagement with and adherence to the Act's requirements in a more integrated and practical manner.

The Official Languages Act, mandates that public bodies in Ireland must ensure the provision of services in both the Irish and English languages. The Act aims to promote and preserve the use of the Irish language across public services, ensuring that citizens can interact with and access services in Irish. Under this legislation, public bodies

are required to prepare a language scheme, approved by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, detailing how they will provide services in Irish. These schemes are intended to increase the visibility and use of Irish in public affairs and contribute to its normalisation in public communication and administration.

The Official Languages Act mandates that public bodies must provide services in both Irish and English, reinforcing the role of Irish in public administration. This legislation ensures that individuals can engage with public services through Irish, strengthening its visibility and everyday use. Under this framework, public bodies have been required to submit language schemes for approval by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, detailing how services will be delivered in Irish. The schemes aim to increase accessibility to Irish-language services and further normalise its use across public communication and administration. In 2021, amendments to the Act introduced phased implementation of new standards across the public and civil service, with specific provisions coming into effect on a structured timeline. One of the key provisions, Section 10A relating to advertising by public bodies, was enacted on 10th October 2022. In response, the institute established a dedicated email address (ato@dkit.ie) to receive and address correspondence from

¹ Dundalk Institute of Technology successfully completed the implementation of its 3rd Irish Language Scheme (2018-2021) in March 2021, and the Executive Board of the Institute approved DkIT's 4th Irish Language Scheme (2021-2024) however, it was deemed unnecessary by the Minister's Department to approve the Institute's 2021-2024 scheme as it is anticipated that under the Official Languages Act (as amended 2021) a new standard or 'caighdeán' will be established that will supersede all previous Irish Language Schemes. The Institute is therefore currently operating under its 3rd Irish Language Scheme 2018-2021.

the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and from the Coimisinéir Teanga | Irish Language Commissioner regarding the implementation of this and subsequent measures.

The Vice President for Strategic Planning, Communications and Development has responsibility for implementing the Act's provisions. The Vice President has appointed the institute's Irish Language Officer to liaise with the Department and An Coimisinéir Teanga | Language Commissioner, providing reports and updates on the implementation of Section 10A and future provisions as they are introduced in stages.

DkIT remains proactive in its commitment to the Act, ensuring compliance with evolving directives from the Department and the Irish Language Commissioner. This includes refining the interpretation, recording, and reporting of relevant metrics to meet statutory requirements effectively.

Throughout this reporting period, DkIT has strengthened its commitment to the Irish Language Scheme, demonstrating significant improvements across key areas:

Bilingual Service

Service provision has expanded, with bilingual implementation across multiple institutional functions. These include job descriptions, invitations, forewords, brochures, leaflets, supplier communications, staff email signatures, public speeches, from the following offices: President's Office; Office of the Vice President for Strategic Planning, Communications and Development; Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar; Office of the Vice President for Finance, Resources & Diversity; Human Resources; De Chastelain Library; Heads of Schools; Finance; School of Informatics & Creative Arts; and IT Services.

Staff Engagement

Continued events and training initiatives have improved staff proficiency in Irish, enabling a greater capacity to offer services through the Irish language. Monthly cultural and linguistic events hosted by De Chastelain Library, in collaboration with the Irish Language Office, alongside the institute's annual Seachtain na Gaeilge events in partnership with Conradh na Gaeilge, have played a vital role in fostering engagement.

Student Engagement

An Irish Language Society | Cumann Gaelach remains active in promoting a dynamic Irish-speaking community on campus. Through organised events and initiatives, the society nurtures an environment where students can connect with and celebrate the Irish language

Resource Accessibility

The institute has expanded the availability of bilingual documentation and resources via its website, ensuring staff, students, and the wider public can access services in their preferred language.

Cultural Events

DkIT has hosted a range of cultural initiatives, including music and poetry nights, designed to celebrate and promote Irish, attracting strong engagement from students and faculty alike.

Public Engagement

The institute has enhanced its bilingual outreach efforts, increasing awareness of the Irish Language Scheme within the broader community.

Digital Integration

Bilingual content continues to expand, with ongoing development aimed at improving digital accessibility and service provision in Irish.

The reporting period from September 2023 to August 2024 has been marked by substantial progress in the promotion and integration of the Irish language at Dundalk Institute of Technology. With sustained commitment and strategic planning, the institute remains dedicated to furthering its Irish language objectives in the years ahead.

17. Audited Accounts

A full set of audited financial statements can be found at the following link: [DkIT – Audited Accounts](#)



Ard Reachtaire Cuntas agus Ciste Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Dundalk Institute of Technology

Opinion on the financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of Dundalk Institute of Technology for the year ended 31 August 2024 as required under the provisions of the Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006. The financial statements comprise

- the consolidated and Institute statement of comprehensive income
- the consolidated and Institute statement of changes in reserves and capital account
- the consolidated and Institute statement of financial position
- the consolidated statement of cash flows, and
- the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the group and the Institute at 31 August 2024 and of the income and expenditure of the group and the Institute for the year then ended in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 — *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland*.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Institute and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Report on information other than the financial statements, and on other matters

The Institute has presented certain other information together with the financial statements. This comprises the annual report, the corporate governance statement and the statement on internal control. My responsibilities to report in relation to such information, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report.

Suspension of capital project

Note 13 to the financial statements discloses that the Institute incurred construction design fees and costs of enabling works in relation to the development of a health and wellbeing innovation and learning hub, capitalised in the financial statements for the years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. The Institute has decided to pause the project indefinitely, and has recognised in the financial statements for 2023/2024 an impairment charge of €241,000 in respect of the expenditure previously capitalised.

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General

4 June 2025

Appendix to the report

Responsibilities of Governing Body members

The corporate governance statement sets out the Governing Body's for

- the preparation of annual financial statements in the form prescribed under Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006
- ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with FRS102
- ensuring the regularity of transactions
- assessing whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate, and
- such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under the Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006 to audit the financial statements of the Institute and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.

- I evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.

- I conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Institute's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Institute to cease to continue as a going concern.
- I evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records.

Information other than the financial statements

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information presented with those statements, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, I am required under the ISAs to read the other information presented and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

Reporting on other matters

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to bodies in receipt of substantial funding from the State in relation to their management and operation. I report if I identify material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I report if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

17.2 Consolidated Income and Expenditure

Dundalk Institute of Technology
Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

CONSOLIDATED AND INSTITUTE STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

		Current Year 31 August 2024		Previous Year 31 August 2023	
	Note	Consolidated €000's	Institute €000's	Consolidated €000's	Institute €000's
Income					
State grants	3	34,224	34,224	29,946	29,946
Tuition fees and student contribution	4	19,777	19,777	20,294	20,294
Research grants & contracts	5	4,903	4,903	5,219	5,219
Student support funding	7	617	617	591	591
Other income	8	6,374	4,399	5,629	3,651
Amortisation of deferred capital grants	19	3,754	3,513	3,629	3,629
Interest income		48	48	1	1
Deferred pension funding	25	15,650	15,650	14,825	14,825
Total Income		85,347	83,131	80,134	78,156
Expenditure					
Staff costs	9	49,723	49,584	48,348	48,049
Retirement benefit cost	25	15,650	15,650	14,825	14,825
Other operating expenses	10	13,504	11,775	14,284	12,524
Impairment of asset	13	241	-	-	-
Depreciation	13	3,662	3,639	3,757	3,757
Total Expenditure		82,780	80,648	81,214	79,155
Surplus / (deficit) for the year before tax and other gains and losses		2,567	2,483	(1,080)	(999)
Taxation	11	-	-	-	-
Surplus / (deficit) for the year before other gains and losses		2,567	2,483	(1,080)	(999)
Actuarial Gains					
Experience (losses)/gains on retirement benefit obligations					
Reduction in pension liabilities arising from retirements in the year	25	12,539	12,539	7,779	7,779
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of retirement benefit obligations	25	(12,129)	(12,129)	17,418	17,418
Total actuarial gains in the year		410	410	25,197	25,197
Adjustment to deferred retirement benefits fund	25	(410)	(410)	(25,197)	(25,197)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year		2,567	2,483	(1,080)	(999)

17.3 Consolidated Balance Sheet

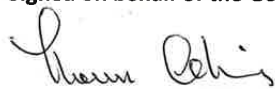
Dundalk Institute of Technology
Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

CONSOLIDATED AND INSTITUTE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Note	Current Year 31 August 2024		Previous Year 31 August 2023	
		Consolidated €000's	Institute €000's	Consolidated €000's	Institute €000's
Non Current Assets					
Fixed Assets	13	91,964	91,873	89,430	89,189
		91,964	91,873	89,430	89,189
Current Assets					
Receivables	15	6,088	5,993	5,826	5,947
Cash and Cash Equivalents	16	15,931	15,512	11,189	10,627
		22,019	21,505	17,015	16,574
Less Payables: amounts falling due within 1 year	17	(20,044)	(19,770)	(17,842)	(17,648)
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)		1,975	1,735	(827)	(1,074)
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		93,939	93,608	88,603	88,115
Provision for Amounts and Charges:					
Retirement Benefits					
Retirement Benefit Obligations	25	(195,369)	(195,369)	(177,690)	(177,690)
Deferred Retirement Benefit Funding Asset	25	195,369	195,369	177,690	177,690
Total Net Assets		93,939	93,608	88,603	88,115
Deferred Capital Grants	19	87,469	87,462	84,900	84,652
Unrestricted Reserves					
Income & Expenditure Reserve		5,100	4,776	2,533	2,293
Capital Development Reserve	20	1,370	1,370	1,170	1,170
Total		93,939	93,608	88,603	88,115

Notes 1-28 form part of these financial statements

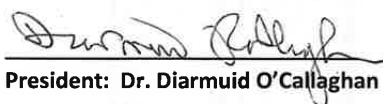
Signed on behalf of the Governing Body



Chairperson: Prof. Thomas Collins

Date:

24/5/2025



President: Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan

Date:

24/5/25