

Self-Evaluation Report 2025 Template

Template Guidance Note

- All sections of this template should be completed in full.
- The format of the template should not be altered.
- The template has been pre-populated with the agreed Performance Objectives, indicators and targets. Pre-populated elements of the template reflect the Performance Agreement and these entries should not be amended. Queries relating to pre-populated information should be submitted to systemperformance@hea.ie.
- Where word count limits apply, these limits should not be exceeded.
- Appendices are not permitted.
- Reporting should be clear, concise, and evidence based.
- Narrative or bullet point formats may be used, and the use of plain English is encouraged.
- Reporting should be cognisant of the information provided in the [System Performance Framework 2023–2028](#) and [System Performance Framework Glossary](#).
- Where institutional strategies, policies, or other institutional documents are referenced, these should be hyperlinked where possible.
- Data presented in the report should be the most recent data available to the institution (timeframe should be specified).
- It is the responsibility of higher education institutions (HEIs) to ensure that the information provided in the report is accurate.
- Redaction may be agreed with the HEA prior to publication, as appropriate.
- The report must be signed by the head of the institution prior to submission.
- The report should be submitted to systemperformance@hea.ie by the stated deadline.

Data Protection

The HEA as data controller will process personal data received via this form in compliance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. We will only process the data received via this form for the purposes of reviewing, evaluating, and reporting on the System Performance Framework 2023–2028 and data will be retained in line with our Records Management Policy only as long as is necessary to meet this purpose. For more information, please see the HEA's [Data Privacy Notice](#).

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Dublin City University Self-Evaluation Report 2025

Introduction

This Self-Evaluation Report will form the basis of the HEA’s assessment of the strategic performance of the institution with respect to the objectives and targets set in the Performance Agreement established between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Dublin City University (DCU) in accordance with the System Performance Framework 2023–2028.

In line with the HEA’s mandate to measure and assess institutions’ strategic performance with a view to strengthening the performance of the higher education system and of designated institutions, and to ensure institutions’ accountability, this Self-Evaluation Report will be published on the HEA website. The HEA will engage with institutions regarding any required redactions prior to publication.

It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the information presented in the submitted report (including qualitative and quantitative data) is accurate.

Part A: Performance Indicators

Text should be added to the white boxes in each of the tables below. Text in the shaded boxes reflects entries in the Performance Agreement and should not be amended.

The most up-to-date data available should be reported in the '**Benchmark data**' and '**2024/25 result**' columns.

The year or range of years to which the reported data relates should be added after the data source in the '**Data source and timeframe**' column.

Pillar: Teaching & Learning

Performance Objective 1

To integrate Transversal skills (TS) in curriculum delivery and University processes for an expanded set of undergraduate Programmes across five Faculties.

Transversal areas of impact: Student Success; Enterprise; Society.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
1.1	Percentage of students from relevant programmes engaging with the platform to evidence TS	Unihub	0% of relevant students engaging with the platform	N/A - no benchmark available at present	N/A	20%	14.4%	40%	60%	80%	80%

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
1.2	Proportion (%) of relevant¹ students that report valuing transversal skills as part of their education	Institutional Student Survey on TS	Baseline to be established.	N/A - no benchmark available at present	N/A	5%	69.4%	20%	35%	50%	50%
1.3	Proportion (%) of relevant Students who perceive transversal skills as important to their employability	Institutional Student Survey on TS	Baseline to be established.	N/A - no benchmark available at present	N/A	20%	46.6%	40%	60%	80%	80%
1.4	Proportion (%) of Employers reporting 'excellent' or 'very good' across a range of transversal skills (on average)	INTRA Employer survey	Baseline to be established.	N/A - no benchmark available at present	N/A	30%	44.6%	45%	60%	75%	75%

¹ Relevant – Students who have undertaken programmes with TS embedded in them.

Pillar: Research & Innovation

Performance Objective 2

To develop our research and innovation outputs and impacts, to grow our research community for both societal and economic benefit and build the crucial research and innovation bedrock required to realise the ambitions of Impact 2030.

Transversal areas of impact: Society; Enterprise; Region.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
2.1	Number of articles in Scopus-indexed journals p.a.	SciVal	Average number of articles in Scopus-indexed journals p.a., in 2019-21 period was 1,270	Comparator EU universities in SciVal	1,270	1,270	1,714	1,397	1,524	1,651	5,842 total publications over 4 years 30% increase on baseline
2.2	Proportion (%) of publications that are Open Access	SciVal and Unpaywall	55% of indexed publications (average 2019-21: 699)	Other Irish HEIs	699 55%	749 59%	878 60% 3-year average	800 63%	851 67%	952 75%	3,352 OA publications over 4 years 36% increase on baseline

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
2.3	Number of Postgraduate Research (PGR) enrolments	SIS, HEA SRS	2019/20: 737	Comparator EU universities	737	898	880	906	1,001	1,100	1,100
2.4	PhD completion rate (%)	SIS	2023/24: In development (% of doctoral students enrolled that have completed/achieved an award)	None available	N/A	74% completed 5% still enrolled	73.94% 4.57%	2014- 2020 entrants: 75% completed 4% still enrolled	2015- 2021 entrants: 76% completed 3% still enrolled	2016-2022 entrants: 76% completed 3% still enrolled	Average 76% completed 3% still enrolled
2.5	Number of Spinouts established	KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey	2023: 2.5 Spin Outs p.a. (3-year average 2020-2023)	Agreed targets with Enterprise Ireland under 2024-2027 KT Boost programme	Not available	2 in 2024	4	4 in 2025	5 in 2026	5 in 2027	Increase spin-outs p.a. by 150% on 2024 3-year average spin-outs p.a. increased to 4.66

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
2.6	Number of Active Spinouts (ASOs)	KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey	2023: 8	Agreed targets with EI/KTI under 2024-2027 KT Boost programme	Not available	10 in 2024	11	11 in 2025	12 in 2026	13 in 2027	Increase number of ASOs by 63%
2.7	Number of Commercialisation Funding (CF) awards to Translate Research into New Ventures	Enterprise Ireland, KT Boost reporting	2023: 4	Agreed targets with EI/KTI under 2024-2027 KT Boost programme	N/A	4 in 2024	4	4 in 2025	5 in 2026	6 in 2027	Increase the number of EI CF awards by 50% to 6 p.a.

Technical note on indicator data for PO 2:

New benchmark data will be released by Enterprise Ireland in late 2025 / early 2026.

Pillar: Access & Participation

Performance Objective 3

To address the diversity of learner needs and emerging system priorities through enhanced pathways into HE and targeted supports for non-traditional learners and the wider DCU student cohort.

Transversal areas of impact: Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
3.1	Proportion (%) of students registered with our Disability Service	Disability Service; Equal Access Survey reported on HEA System Performance Dashboard	2022/23: 1,100 students registered with disability service 6%	Proportion of students with a disability enrolled across all HEIs (6.2% in 2020/21)	8% 2023/2024 AHEAD	1,235 6.5%	1459 7.4%	1,330 7%	1,425 7.5%	1,615 8.5%	1,615 2.5 p.p. increase on baseline
3.2	Proportion (%) of eligible programmes achieving target intake from FET	SIS; Admissions data	2022/23: 53% of eligible programmes > 5% FET intake 6.4% intake from FET	None available	None available	70% of eligible programmes > 5% FET intake	63% of eligible programmes > 5% FET	95% of eligible programmes > 5% FET intake	70% of eligible programmes > 7.5% FET intake	70% of eligible programmes > 7.5% FET intake	7.5% intake from FET across eligible programmes

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
			across eligible programmes								
3.3	Completion rate (%) for Access students	SIS; HEA SRS and Non-Progression and Completion Dashboard; Access Service data	2022/23: 82.8%	Average, all HEIs (83% in 2023/24)	Average, all HEIs (83% in 2023/24)	83%	85.97%	84%	85%	86.5%	Increase 4-year undergraduate completion rate for Access students by 3.7 p.p.
3.4	Number of postgraduate students registered with Access Service	Access Service data	2022/2023: 56	None available	None available	58	42	60	63	65	65 16% increase on baseline
3.5	Proportion (%) of students indicating Strong Sense of Belonging (SSB) in Student	SS&D Student Survey and Eurostudent-8-Final-Report.pdf	2021/22: 55.5%	HEA Analysis of Eurostat 8 Survey 61%	N/A	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	75%	19 p.p. increase in reported sense of belonging

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
	Wellbeing survey										
3.6	Proportion (%) of students indicating awareness of emotional and mental health supports (AS) in Student Wellbeing survey	SS&D Student Survey	2021/22: 62.7%	None available	None available	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	75%	Awareness of emotional and mental health supports increased by 12 p.p.
3.7	Proportion (%) of students indicating experience of discriminatory & hostile behaviour (DHB) in Student Wellbeing survey	SS&D Student Survey	2021/22: 11.62%.	None available	None available	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	5%	Proportion of students experiencing discriminatory & hostile behaviour reduced by 6.5 p.p.

Pillar: Engagement

Performance Objective 4

To design a Sustainable Development Framework to ensure organisational sustainability across all University areas and activities, bringing cohesion to all compliance requirements, in an inclusive and diverse environment.

Transversal areas of impact: Climate & Sustainable Development; Society; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Institutional Leadership & Culture.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
4.1	Emissions savings from Energy Savings Projects in kilograms of CO₂e	DCU Climate Action Roadmap Annual Reports; SEAI Monitoring & Reporting (M&R) System	Average 2016-2018 as per SEAI: 14,587,030 (kg CO ₂ e)	SEAI Public Sector Targets/Climate Action Plan 2023 targets (DECC, 2023)	SEAI Public Sector Annual Report 2023 - Total CO₂ for Further & Higher Education Research, Innovation & Science - 32%	500,000 (kg CO₂e)	-639,804 (kg CO₂e)	350,000 (kg CO ₂ e)	550,000 (kg CO ₂ e)	550,000 (kg CO ₂ e)	1,950,000 (kg CO₂e)
4.2	Proportion (%) of staff who	Core HR	2023: 851	None	None	162	375	162	160	160	1,500

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
	attend EDI Training		48%	available	available	10%	20%	10%	9%	9%	85%
4.3	Proportion (%) of staff who report an increased understanding of EDI issues having attended training	Post training survey	2023: 70%	None available	None available	70%	98%	70%	70%	70%	70%
4.4	Proportion (%) of Schools with Athena Swan Bronze Awards	Core HR; Athena Swan Ireland	2023: 6 25%	Athena Swan Charter	None available	11 45%	11 45%	16 67%	21 87.5%	24 100%	24 100%

Technical note on indicator data for PO 4:

4.1 DCU has reset the baseline to align with SEAI's Monitoring and Reporting system. The original baseline was an estimated 2018 emissions whereas the SEAI baseline is an average of 2016-2018 emissions. This change will facilitate clarity and consistency across reports.

The comparative Benchmark data is from the latest SEAI Public Sector Annual Report 2024. The emission reduction for the Further & Higher Education Research, Innovation & Science Sector was reported at a 32% reduction over the baseline. DCU achieved a 35% reduction in the same period.

Performance Objective 5

To strengthen the focus and impact of our local, national, and international partnerships through coherence, data analytics and business intelligence, for the benefit of the University and our community, industry, societal and economic stakeholders.

Transversal areas of impact: Enterprise; Society; Region; International; Institutional Leadership & Culture.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
5.1	Number of individual engagement activities undertaken and recorded	Engagement Database	2023/24: 0 entries in Database	None available (Novel initiative)	N/A	3,000	3,841	1,000	1,500	500	6,000
5.2	Number of new Public Participation Network Partnerships with local councils	Internal records	2023/24: 1	None available (Novel initiative)	N/A	1	2	1	1	1	4
5.3	Proportion of undergraduate students engaged in volunteering	Internal records	2023/24: 200 1.3%	No per HEI benchmark available	N/A	250 1.4%	1130 5.5%	300 1.7%	350 2%	400 2.2%	1,300 students over 4 years 0.9 p.p. increase on baseline
5.4	Number of non-EU enrolments as a	Student Information	2023/24: 905	Irish HE Sector	11.1% in 2023/24	1,102 5.6%	2038 10.5%	1,122 5.7%	1,241 6.3%	1,377 7%	4,842 over 4 years

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
	proportion (%) of total enrolments	System; HEA SRS	4.6%	(9.83% in 2022/23)							2.4 p.p. increase on baseline

Part B: Performance Evaluation and Strategic Reflection

Text should be added to the white boxes in each of the tables below. Word count should be recorded as indicated. Guidance on the information required in each table is provided in the shaded boxes. Pre-populated elements of Part B reflect the Performance Agreement and these entries should not be amended.

Section 1: Context

Provide an update on the context for the implementation of the institution's Performance Agreement in academic year 2024/25. This should include information on the following, as relevant:

- Institutional strategy, including stage of development and/or implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Changes to the organisation's structure and/or senior leadership.
- Changes to the profile of the institution, i.e. significant changes to the number of staff and/or students or to programme delivery.
- Improvement or development of data collection and evaluation systems and processes, e.g. action taken to address data challenges or gaps, or any new challenges or data gaps that have been identified since the development of the Performance Agreement or submission of the previous SER.
- Any modifications (requested or approved) to the Performance Agreement.

Word limit: 500

Our strategy, "Transformation for an Unscripted Future" (2023-2028), has just finished its second full year of implementation. The alignment of Component Strategies, with strong tracking underpinned by data visualisation of strategic achievement, provides us with a comprehensive dashboard of yearly and years to date progress. Despite the funding challenges we have managed to deliver on over 90% of our annual key performance Indicators (KPIs), with our guiding principle of 'People, Focus and Impact' proving to be an invaluable lens through which to view and prioritise activity. Setting annual KPIs has delivered the flexibility and agility to enable us to achieve our longer-term objectives, while enabling adjustment of annual targets in response to new challenges and opportunities.

We continued our strategic organisational structure review with changes including the creation of a Dean of Global Relations, reporting to the Deputy President and unifying all of our student recruitment activities.

Our data governance project has made significant progress in mapping our many disparate data repositories and systems, with a view to achieving more business-intelligence based decision

making. Our first full year of the new Student Information System (SIS) saw us successfully implement the Banner suite of systems across the full cycle of academic services, from enrolment, through assessment, to progression. The awarding of €1m in Impact Assessment Performance Funding was very welcome and is being directed into projects to use AI to ‘create capacity’ across a number of University business areas. Notably, AI will be used to bridge the gaps between systems which are not integrated, affording more rapid access to full data sets, which currently requires significant manual intervention.

We are delighted to have met, or in many cases exceeded, the targets set under this Performance Agreement. The strong linking of these Performance Agreement to the DCU strategic objectives facilitated the prioritisation and achievement of our Performance Agreement objectives. As a result of this strong performance, we wish to revise a number of targets, listed below and explained under each objective:

1. PO1 – Transversal Skills (TS)

As a novel initiative, with no available benchmarks or baselines, we took a very cautious approach to our targets which have largely been exceeded by a significant amount. Proposed changes are discussed on page 24.

2. PO3

Analysis of patterns of FE applications has caused us to revise our approach to building opportunities for those entering from the FE sector, as they appear to prefer to progress to a narrower range of programmes. Our proposed changes are discussed under this objective (p25).

3. PO5

5.3 Due to a change in calculating numbers, we wish to revise our Student Volunteering targets as outlined on page 20.

5.4 Our performance in recruiting non-EU students has been very successful. We wish to revise our annual targets, outlined on page 31, taking account of this growth but also the many forces which cause uncertainty in this area.

[Word count: 477]

Section 2: Evaluation of Performance

Provide an evaluation of the institution's performance in relation to this Performance Objective, with reference to the indicator data provided in Part A. This should include:

- Analysis of the indicator data for this Performance Objective, e.g.:
 - Trend analysis and benchmarking of performance with reference to baselines, benchmarks, and targets. Graphs or charts to illustrate the analysis provided should be labelled and cross-referenced in the commentary.
- Assessment of implementation, e.g.:
 - Effectiveness of the specific actions related to the Performance Objective as demonstrated by the analysis of the indicator data.
 - Internal or external factors that have supported or impeded the achievement of targets.
 - Any additional evidence of performance, e.g. qualitative evidence of outcomes.
- Strategic reflection, e.g.:
 - Any learning from the analysis of the institution's performance.
 - How learning is being applied to maintain and/or enhance implementation and outcomes in future.
 - How learning is being used to inform decision making, strategy development, policy, and/or strategic planning.
 - New or emerging opportunities, challenges, and risks related to the Performance Objective.
 - Priority(s) in relation to this Performance Objective for the year ahead, with reference to any new actions or initiatives to support implementation.

Word limit: 1,000

Pillar: Teaching & Learning

Performance Objective 1

To integrate Transversal skills (TS) in curriculum delivery and University processes for an expanded set of undergraduate Programmes across five Faculties.

Transversal areas of impact:

Student Success; Enterprise; Society.

Evaluation of Performance Data:

All of the PO1 targets, with the exception of Indicator 1.1, for the 24/25 academic year have been very positive. Despite 24/25 being just the first year of implementation of curriculum integration, success is reflective of the successful (if slightly delayed) launch of a new digital platform, an ongoing, extensive socialisation and training strategy for students and staff in relation to Transversal Skills, as well as a significant upgrade to the instrument used to gather employers' perspectives of DCU students during their work (INTRA) placement.

Transversal Skills were initially focused on 10 new undergraduate programmes as part of the HCI-funded DCU Futures project. This number increased to 14 for the 2024/25 academic year and is currently (Sept 2025) targeted at 26 undergraduate programmes, with further roll out planned for 2026/27. To support roll-out in 24/25, an extensive programme was undertaken - meeting the incoming (Year 1) students in person during orientation to introduce them to our transversal skills strategy, followed by formal 1-hour training in the use of the MySkills platform for all students in all years of all 14 programmes. This amounted to 56 student cohorts in total and was supported by twice-weekly student drop-in clinics held on Zoom during semester 2 to assist students with any queries they might have.

As shown in Part A, the target level of engagement for indicator 1.1 was 20% of students from relevant programmes. The 14.4% recorded is below this target but can be explained by a delay to the launch of the MySkills platform which was outside the control of the Transversal skills team. The launch was scheduled for September 2024, but due to the rollout of a major new student information system across the university, the platform launch had to be pushed out until January 2025. As such, the 14.4% is not a concerning shortfall in engagement and we are confident that the target of 40% for the 25/26 academic year will be achieved.

With regard to indicator 1.2 (students reporting valuing transversal skills as part of their education), for which we did not have a baseline, the value of 69.4% was far higher than anticipated. This may in part be due to an awareness-raising strategy done with students in semester 1 of the 24/25 academic year, even though the platform was not launched until semester 2, 2025. This strongly emphasised the importance of transversal skills to students' higher education journey and employability, with a particular emphasis on the need to develop

transversal skills in order to maximise one's impact in any domain. In addition to this, the inclusion of transversal skills as formal learning outcomes within modules for the first time and the rating of these by means of a universal rubric for each competence statement that comprises each skill, means that students are becoming far more aware of the centrality of these skills to their personal and professional development.

For indicator 1.3 (students perceiving transversal skills as important to their employability), for which we also did not have a baseline, this figure (46.6%) was also significantly above expectations and may again be a reflection of the transversal skills socialisation and awareness-raising. In terms of informal and qualitative data, it was very noticeable during the DCU Futures Student Showcase event in 2025, that the students on Futures programmes are putting significant weighting on the role of transversal skills in securing and executing their duties for INTRA placement.

As regards indicator 1.4 (employers reporting 'excellent' or 'very good' across a range of transversal skills) this figure (44.6%) was again above the indicator which was set for this first year (30%), and notably also indicated a difference between employers' rating of the transversal skills of students from Futures programmes compared with those from 'non-Futures' programmes. This is a positive initial signal of the tangible impact of transversal skills outside of the formal educational environment.

Strategic Reflection:

As discussed, as a novel initiative, with no available comparator benchmarks, some baselines were overlay conservative, and the differentiation between two (valuing TSs in education and employment) less than anticipated.

A key aim for the 25/26 academic year is to secure greater student engagement with the MySkills platform from the start of the academic year. As such, rather than a brief information session about transversal skills during orientation, for 25/26 incoming students from all 26 programmes are receiving formal (1 hour) training on the platform during orientation, with students from subsequent years of the 12 scaling programmes receiving this training in the early weeks of semester 1. In addition to this, we will be working with the Student Union to help further stimulate student engagement with the platform. We are also working in greater collaboration with academic staff who have transversal skills integrated into their modules, so that they too can emphasise the importance of these skills and further encourage students to engage. Conducting focus groups (Q2 2025) with students to gain their perspectives on transversal skills and on the platform in terms of perceived value and factors that might stimulate or hinder engagement was very valuable. In particular, it highlighted students' desire for an easy-to-use smartphone app for the platform. This is something which we are currently exploring.

Overall, very significant progress was made with transversal skills during the 24/25 academic year. Transversal skills (or rather the competence statements that comprise these skills) were integrated into 100 modules across the university, involving over 80 academic staff, with more than 18,000 individual formal ratings added to the MySkills platform. This highlights innovations

in approaches to teaching and assessing within curricula and does not include the number of self-reported ratings which students added themselves.

Given that this was the first year of evaluation we are not proposing a revision of indicators until the end of Year 2 when we can see whether this trajectory continues. However, as well feel that 1.2 and 1.3 are essentially asking the same thing, we wish to remove 1.2.

[Word count: 993]

Pillar: Research & Innovation

Performance Objective 2

To develop our research and innovation outputs and impacts, to grow our research community for both societal and economic benefit and build the crucial research and innovation bedrock required to realise the ambitions of Impact 2030.

Transversal areas of impact:

Society; Enterprise; Region.

Evaluation of Performance Data:

Research Performance trends and implementation analysis.

DCU published 1,714 articles in Scopus-ranked peer-reviewed journals in 2024 (latest data) - 35% ahead of baseline and targets - and indeed ahead of our 2027-28 growth target. We do not suggest changing targets this year based on one year's data, which may prove to be an outlier, but will revise our targets upwards next year if this trajectory is repeated. This growth is by far the strongest among the Irish universities, and well ahead of EU cohort average performance. If maintained, this performance will place DCU on a trajectory towards a higher-performing EU cohort than at present. It is worth noting that the growth in the quantity of articles, has happened while also increasing the quality and impact of those articles as measured by proportion of top quartile articles and Field Weighted Citation Index. DCU now has the highest FWCI of the seven research-focused universities in the Republic of Ireland (2.8). A score of 2.8 also means that our published research is cited 2.8 times more than the global average. This is a very strong performance. Research Ireland Centres for example have a FWCI target of 2.0. DCU has also increased the proportion of articles published in top-quartile ranked journals from 60% to 65.7%, confirming that articles are being accepted in high quality journals and that there is no negative quantity quality trades-offs happening.

60% of articles are open access - marginally ahead of target (59%). This is a challenging future growth target, given the continuing attitude of the four major journal publishers, and the absence of financial capacity to pay a higher proportion of APC's. Technical limitations of software packages, also mean that articles which are open access in smaller but crucial discipline-specific depositaries are missed by the software packages, under-counting open access, by a degree which is difficult to measure.

We had sought to grow PhD numbers by 161 (21.8%). We achieved growth of 143 (19.4%). We are confident that this target would have been exceeded, if the Research Ireland Research Centres call had not been delayed. That delay and the related wind down of the old SFI Centres for Research Training without a replacement, has taken a very significant number of PhD scholarships (over 1,000) out of the system, over the past 18 months. Our objective remains to get

this back on track over the next year.

We are satisfied with our PhD completion rate, and apart from some covid-related delays, do not envisage a difficulty in maintaining our performance.

We have the highest level of commercial spin-outs, compared to scale of research income in the Republic of Ireland. Spin-outs are ahead of target, licences and Enterprise Ireland Funding awards are on target.

Strategic Reflection

The very strong growth in the scale of peer-reviewed published research, is we believe a result of a strong and focused strategic plan, which has broad acceptance across the staff community, and which is, as a result, reflected in implementation plans across the university's academic and professional support units.

Academic workload management, along with recruitment, retention and promotion, all reflect a focused set of priorities, along with a collegiate and collective leadership culture. We have also implemented significant improvements in our research support function.

The growth in PhD numbers, now frequently referenced by the Minister as a national priority, will remain very challenging, without additional state support. While there will be growth in EU and Business funding of PhDs, Irish state funding through the various agencies including the HEA will need to make the biggest contribution if the ambition of Impact 2030 is to be delivered.

Our internal decision-making is driven by an evidence-based culture, with annual and quarterly reviews of our KPIs, by senior management and DCU's Research Strategy Committee. This is complemented by analysis of individual areas of focus, including for example publication patterns by our PhD students, and the impact of open access on citations.

DCU's university strategy is then reviewed annually, based on performance analysis, with performance assessed and future targets adjusted, and specific implementation initiatives adjusted as required.

A key learning is that this level of evidence-sharing is not only crucial to decision-making, it also assists staff motivation, when they can see the evidence base for a decision. Staff engagement in our view was crucial to these results, and this was enhanced by the focus on a small number of objectives, and by ongoing evidence-based reflection.

The key challenge in our view is the financial context for higher education in Ireland. The failure of government HEI funding to keep pace with nationally awarded pay increases, and inflation in energy and maintenance costs, are particularly challenging. This financial context is evidenced by poor staff-student ratios by comparison with our EU peers, dated research equipment, and inadequate PhD numbers compared to innovation leaders in Europe, all of which makes meeting research targets more difficult.

Beyond finances we are putting significant focus on Open Research over the next 12 months, and within that Open Access publications, to seek to maximise cost-effective ways of providing open access while also publishing in high quality outputs.

We are confident that our existing implementation measures will maintain a level of Publications, impact, and commercial spin-outs and licences, at or ahead of, our targets. We have introduced a number of initiatives to support academic staff at School and Faculty level designed to maintain momentum in this regard. PhD numbers ultimately will largely be driven by available / secured funding, and if funding is available DCU will strengthen our professional supports for staff making EU funding applications.

[Word count: 935]

Pillar: Access & Participation

Performance Objective 3

To address the diversity of learner needs and emerging system priorities through enhanced pathways into HE and targeted supports for non-traditional learners and the wider DCU student cohort.

Transversal areas of impact:

Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging.

Evaluation of Performance Data:

Indicators 3.1, 3.3, 3.4

In 2024/25 1459 students were signed up to the Disability & Learning Support Service in DCU. At 7.4%, this surpassed our original target of 6.5% and the original sectoral benchmark figure of 6.2%. This level of growth is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

The growth in number of students with a disability reflects strong progress in:

- Fully maximising the DARE admissions route
- Providing transition opportunities through our Autism Summer School & DARE/DLSS Orientation
- Addressing the diversity of learner needs through a student-centred approach
- Providing targeted supports for non-traditional learners and the broader student cohort.

The four-year graduation rate for Access students in 2024-2025 is an impressive 85.97%, surpassing the target by nearly three percentage points. Although this is an excellent outcome, it aligns with earlier data showing that Access students who commenced in 2020 had a strong first-year retention and progression rate. That cohort began during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenging conditions, the group demonstrated resilience, and the high completion rate underlines the support from DCU and their perseverance.

Completion Rate: The 85.97% completion rate for access students significantly exceeds the target and aligns with the earlier promising first-year retention and progression rates.

COVID-19: This cohort's educational experience was heavily impacted by the pandemic. They spent their first year entirely online, shifted to a hybrid model in the second year, and then mostly returned to in-person classes. These transitions posed substantial challenges to their learning, influenced by their personal and living circumstances.

Resilience and Support: The report highlights the extraordinary resilience of the students who endured difficult circumstances. It also acknowledges the significant efforts made by DCU to

support and retain these students during the pandemic and beyond. The successful completion rate is a testament to this collaborative effort.

The figure of 42 access students progressing to postgraduate study in 24/25 might be an underestimate. In 2024, DCU introduced a new student record system, which assigns a new student ID to each student. Previously a student who progressed on to a PG prog, used the same Student ID which they had as an undergraduate. Historical data show that some access students do not transition directly from undergraduate to postgraduate studies. Reviewing data from 22/23 and 23/24 reveals that between 33% and 40% of access students enrolling in a postgraduate programme had graduated at least two years earlier. Currently, we cannot track access students who graduated before 2023 and enrolled in a postgraduate programme in 2024, as they were assigned a new ID.

The unexpected loss of progression information resulting from the new student record system is unfortunate. However, based on historical data indicating that approximately 33-40% of postgraduate students return more than two years after graduation, it appears that the actual numbers may be closer to our target, ranging between 56 and 59 students.

3.2 FE intake:

DCU has delivered progress against our ambition to grow the number of undergraduate students admitted on the basis of a further education (FE) qualification. At the time of development of the Performance Agreement, there was no sectoral data available to benchmark against, but HEA data are now available that provide a benchmark for this goal. In 23/24, 4.1% of entrants to IUA institutions for honours degree programmes were admitted on the basis of a FE award or equivalent. DCU was already in a strong position compared to that benchmark, with 6.5% of our entrants coming through this route in 23/24.

Strategic Reflection:

Indicators 3.1, 3.4, 3.4

The significant increase in students with disabilities, in particular students from the National Access Plan (NAP) priority groups, brings with it increased demands on the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD). We have seen a substantial increase in the costs associated with Personal Assistants for students with disabilities since 2023/24, which has not been fully funded through the FSD. The demand for high-cost supports is expected to continue rising in line with achieving NAP targets.

The high completion rate highlights the effective support system implemented by DCU during the challenging years of 2020-2022. A range of supports was increased and delivered intensely, and it is important to review them to ensure they are preserved and integrated into the ongoing support system. Students from widening participation backgrounds faced additional challenges during the pandemic, as indicated by various measures, including academic performance. Notably, access students had a higher completion rate than the overall student population, demonstrating the strength of DCU's support for these students.

We will work with our Registry to develop a method to link students returning for postgraduate programmes to their previous records.

3.2 FE Intake

Our experience over the last year to 18 months has clarified that our original strategy for growth of broadening the range of eligible programmes, while widening opportunity, is not as effective in delivering broad-based growth, as we had hoped. There appears to be a concentration within the FE sector (and FE graduates) on a relatively small range of target higher education programmes. For example, despite recruitment efforts, about 20% of our eligible programmes have not had any qualified FE applicants. This insight has informed a revision of our Equity of Access Strategy where we are focusing on the pipeline via specific partnerships with FET colleges. In this context, retaining indicators explicitly focused on the spread of intake does not make sense, and the 10% figure may not be met for reasons to do with supply rather than lack of opportunity or support toward admission on behalf of DCU. This challenge is exacerbated by the ongoing increase in overall number of DCU undergraduate entrants, and falling numbers of FE graduates in the region. For this reason, we are suggesting a revised approach with 7.5% as an overall indicator and steps toward that in between, rather than ones based on the spread of enrolments. Sectoral data now available (Figure 1) support the high level of ambition still incorporated in this indicator.

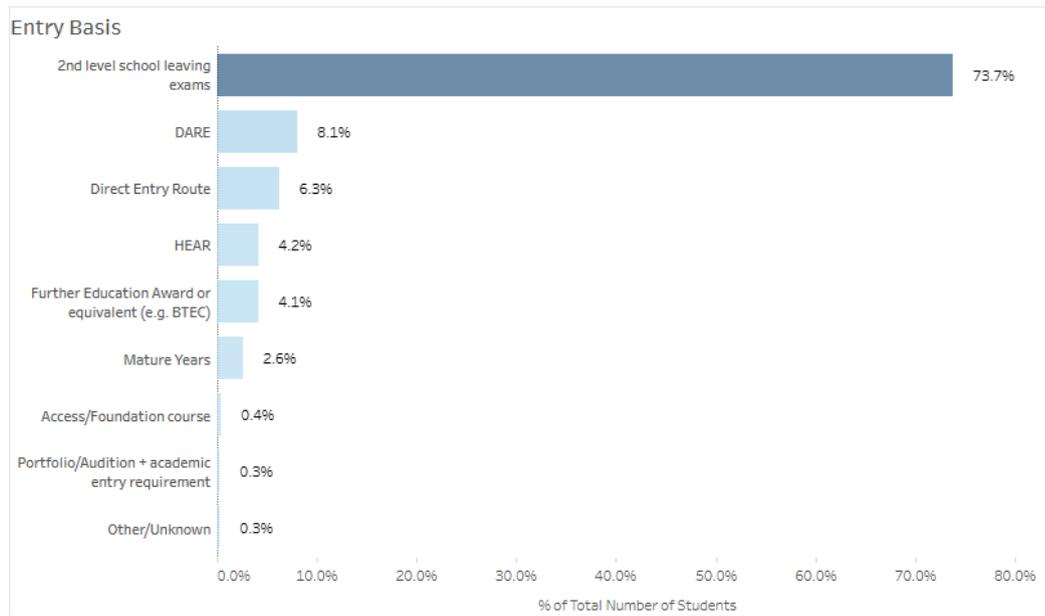


Figure 1: All IUA Institutions, 23/24 honours degrees

As a result of this analysis, we are proposing revising indicator 3.2 using SRS data.

[Word count: 996]

Pillar: Engagement

Performance Objective 4

To design a Sustainable Development Framework to ensure organisational sustainability across all University areas and activities, bringing cohesion to all compliance requirements, in an inclusive and diverse environment.

Transversal areas of impact:

Climate & Sustainable Development; Society; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Institutional Leadership & Culture.

Evaluation of Performance Data:

Indicator 4.1

The emissions reduction comparison between 2023 and 2024 (i.e. the 2024/2025 result) shows an overall increase in emission, however this is somewhat misleading due to unusually low emission data in 2023 due to onsite issues with non-functioning heating systems in 2023. Overall DCU continues on a trajectory to meet the 2030 emission reduction targets. These targets will be hugely impact by the level of funding available to DCU, through the SEAI Pathfinder programme and other potential funding avenues, to undertake the necessary works to decarbonise the heating systems but also to implement efficiency measures to maintain electricity consumption at levels that will enable DCU to operate and meet the mandated targets.

Indicators 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

DCU exceeded our target of 10% of staff attending training in 2024/25, with 20% (375) staff participation for this reporting period. Training ranged from Autism Awareness, Irish Sign Language, Digital Accessibility and Inclusive Technologies to Anti Racism, Intercultural Awareness and LGBTQ+ Allyship. 98% of training participants who completed the feedback form post-training reported an increased understanding of EDI issues as a result of attending the training.

We successfully achieved our target of 45% of schools attaining an Athena Swan Bronze Award for this reporting period.

Strategic Reflection:

Indicator 4.1

The decarbonisation targets represent only a small amount of our efforts with respect to climate ad net zero. In 2024 our newly constituted Green Campus Committee (which is made up of staff and students) Conducted a survey across the campus to ask for input into areas which should be prioritised. A range of relevant projects was identified, including Solar panels, energy usage in

classrooms, 'reduce your use' campaigns, educational interventions, courses on growing your own food, increased campus biodiversity, amongst many others (Figure 3).

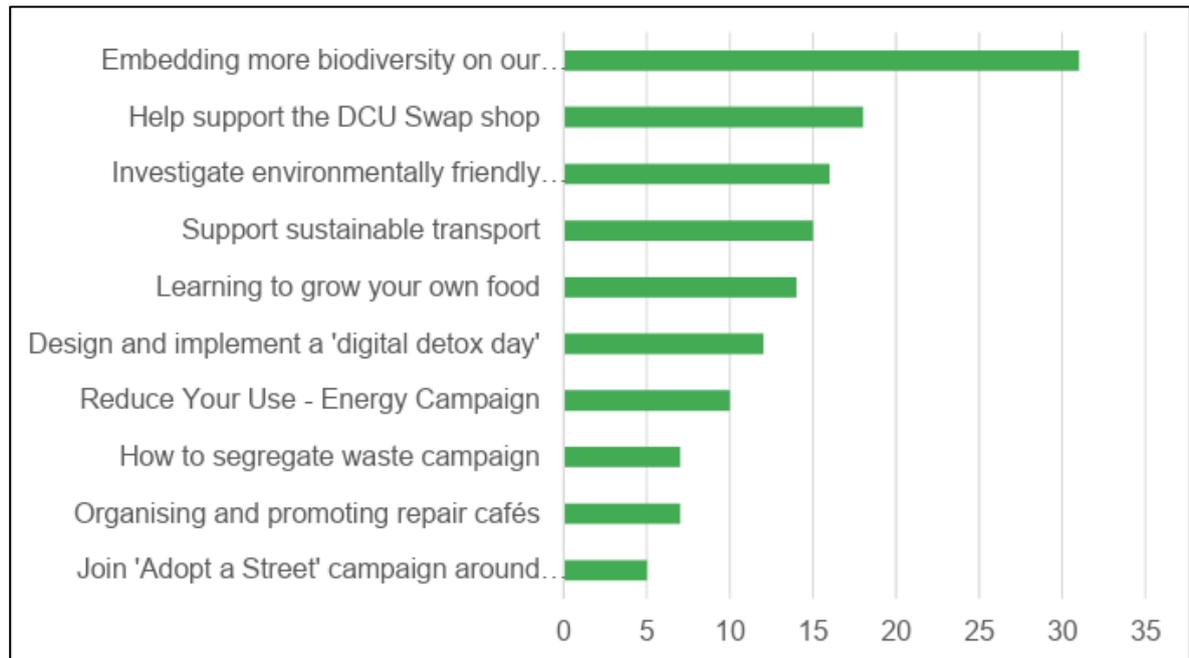


Figure 3: Green Campus Project Areas

Many of our buildings are reaching an age where normal refurbishing is required and doing this in a climate-positive way would hugely contribute to the national climate targets. While our newer buildings have solar panels and are state of the art with respect to energy efficiency, to fit solar panels, for example, to our older building, would be very expensive as many would require new roofs as current ones would not sustain addition of solar panels. would need to be

The decarbonisation targets are challenging, with the necessary additional financial resources, DCU is committed to meeting these targets.

Indicators 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

In the reporting period, only 36% of training attendees completed a feedback form, making it difficult to robustly track levels of understanding across all attendees. Actions to address the low uptake on feedback forms are actively being considered, trialled and implemented with support from the Learning and Organisational Development team. Additionally, many of our training offerings have existed for several years, and under the Athena Swan Silver Action Plan 2024 - 2029 a training needs analysis of all our EDI-related training (both live sessions and e-modules) has been committed to. This will be conducted in 2025/2026 academic year and will ensure that a full, in-depth review of our current offerings is carried out, and new or emerging training needs identified and delivered to ensure active engagement from our staff population.

Engagement with the Athena Swan charter remains high and we expect to meet all upcoming targets in respect to this.

[Word count: 650]

Performance Objective 5

To strengthen the focus and impact of our local, national, and international partnerships through coherence, data analytics and business intelligence, for the benefit of the University and our community, industry, societal and economic stakeholders.

Transversal areas of impact:

Enterprise; Society; Region; International; Institutional Leadership & Culture.

Evaluation of Performance Data:

Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

At DCU we have always prioritised our regional partners – industry, community, society. We have met or exceeded each of our targets, with our engagement database entries being exceeded by 841, and an additional PPN being established over the target. We have engaged with over 100 communities via our PPNs and our student volunteering numbers are also very positive, although an adjustment to how we measure this has also been made and will be discussed later.

Indicator 5.4

There has been a significant increase in the Non-EU enrolments at DCU in 2024-25. A total of 2038 Non-EU enrolments were recorded in the period 2024-25, which is an increase of 1152 enrolments in the past year. This cohort now represents 10.5% of the overall DCU enrolments at UG and PG levels. The 2024-25 result of 10.5% for UG and PG Non-EU enrolments is almost double the target of 5.6% set by DCU for Non-EU enrolments for 2024-25, and also greatly exceeds the original four year target (set at 7% by 2028) for Non-EU enrolment within the HEA Compact. The performance in 2024-25 brings DCU very close to the average of 11.1% for Non-EU enrolments across the Irish HE sector for 2023-24.

The performance in 2024-25 has exceeded expectations, and therefore, there is a need to adjust projected targets for Non-EU enrolments for the final three years of this Agreement. The area of highest performance in terms of Non-EU enrolment was at the postgraduate taught level where there was an increase of 136%, with undergraduate enrolments increasing by 120%, and postgraduate research enrolments increasing by 73% in 2024-25. The Non-EU postgraduate enrolments are at a level that DCU would like to maintain (rather than grow). At the undergraduate level, there is capacity to increase the number of Non-EU enrolments, so there is a focus on expansion at this level in the coming years.

Strategic Reflection:

Relationships with PPN and corresponding local authorities have grown and improved year on year. Dublin City, Fingal and Dun-Laoghaire-Rathdown are all partners in working with their PPNs. PPNs have improved provision of capacity building programmes in the local area being recognised by the community sector. Community organisations engaged with PPNs grew over 5% from Year 1 (89) to (113).

In the spirit of ‘focus and impact’ a project to consolidate information on external engagement with a view to supporting intelligence-based decision making, was commenced. Data visualisation dashboards integrate data from a number of University systems allow us to analyse the breadth and depth of engagement with external stakeholders and thus to strategically prioritise the most valuable in terms of our role in our various communities. Phase One of the project is focused on industry engagement and involves consolidation of data from DCU Careers Service, the Placement Service, INTRA, Graduate Outcomes data, Research Development and Support, Alumni Relations and DCU Trust.

Having reviewed how volunteering activities are considered across the sector, volunteering figures now include on-campus volunteer activities as well as off campus. Therefore, the number of volunteering has increased significantly and is more accurately representative of our student’s community-focussed engagement. We wish to change our future targets to 6%, 6.5% and 7% for the remainder of this Agreement.

The increase in non-EU applications in 2024-25 has been achieved mainly through direct recruitment activities, that include engagement with international university partners, providers and agents in existing and new countries/regions, and also through implementation of a new digital recruitment strategy. The DCU recruitment teams, registry, student support and development, faculty and many other units have further supported progression during the lifecycle of recruitment (from application to enrolment), and progression within and beyond the lifespan of academic programmes.

We recognise the importance of using data and analytics to inform decision making and informing future international recruitment strategy. This data is gathered through internal DCU student enrolment dashboards (current and historic datasets), external market intelligence sourced through HEA statistics and third-party marketing and recruitment partners.

Given the cyclical nature of student recruitment, there has been a focus on streamlining current processes, and in being agile in pivoting to new objectives/strategies where necessary. There are opportunities in emerging markets to diversify the source countries of students, particularly in Southeast Asia and MENA regions. Although the US market now presents additional challenges for student recruitment, there are still opportunities for developing the study abroad offering and attracting additional students to undertake studies at DCU for a semester or indeed, a full year of study.

The high levels of enrolment from specific countries brings risk in terms of dependency on narrow markets as well as potential for a lack of diversity in Non-EU student populations within some programmes at DCU. These risks are being mitigated through the continued diversification of source countries within recruitment strategies and activity. The dynamic geopolitical contexts beyond the EU present a range of challenges, including reduced access to funding, visa restrictions, changes in immigration policies and reorientation of domestic government policy towards ‘internationalisation at home’ or ‘internationalisation near home’ in particular geographical regions. The more recent increase in attacks on non-Irish populations may also

damage Ireland’s reputation as a safe country for international education, which may in turn negatively impact International recruitment.

The main priorities for the year ahead are to continue to focus on diversifying source countries of the student body, to sustain enrolments at PGT levels, to increase enrolments at UG levels, and to increase the Non-EU student enrolments across a wider range of DCU programmes.

The proposed new overall projected targets for 2025-26/ 2026-27/ 2027-28 are shown below.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
5.4	Number of non-EU enrolments as a proportion (%) of total enrolments	Student Information System; HEA SRS	2023/24: 905 4.6%	Irish HE Sector (11.1% in 2022/23)	11.1% (2023/24)	1,102 5.6%	2038 10.5%	NEW 2100 10.7% [OLD 1,122 5.7%]	NEW 2162 10.9% [OLD 1,241 6.3%]	NEW 2224 11.1% [OLD 1,377 7%]	NEW 9429 students over 4 years 6.5p.p. increase on baseline [OLD 4,842 over 4 years 2.4 p.p. increase on baseline]

Figure 4: New Targets for Non-EU recruitment

[Word count: 907]

Section 3: System Learning and Policy Development

Comment on any learning or insights arising from the institution's self-evaluation of performance in relation to the Performance Agreement that may contribute to system learning and/or national policy development and implementation.

Word limit: 300

The HEA will have noted that we have suggested upward revisions to some of our agreed KPIs. It is important to note that these are not due to an earlier lack of ambition but, rather, to a stellar performance from staff throughout DCU. Adding weight to this conclusion, it is pleasing to note that the THE rankings, embargoed until October 9th, have placed DCU at 308 worldwide and with the strongest improvement across all Irish HEIs. While excellent news, the learning for us is the ever-increasing importance of staff care and support. The rankings increase comes at a staff cost which is becoming increasingly challenging given the under-resourcing of the sector and DCU's current staff:student ratio.

In terms of national policy development and implementation, global rankings are important and must be nurtured both practically and financially. The development of better data sets and sophisticated analytics undoubtedly allows the sector to tell its best stories in a very compelling manner so investments in such developments are really paying off.

[Word count: 169]

Section 4: Signature of the Head of the Institution

The SER should be signed by the Head of the Institution prior to submission.

On behalf of Dublin City University , I declare that the particulars supplied in this report are true and correct.	
Signature:	
Print Name:	Professor Dáire Keogh
Date:	26 September 2025