HEA | AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

# 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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# Technological University Dublin 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 Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) 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 grow University enrolments through our transformative education, attracting new and diverse students, with a target to grow total student enrolments by 12%.**

**Transversal areas of impact:** Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; International.

| 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** | **Full-time undergraduate student enrolments as a proportion of total taught enrolments (FTE)** | HEA SRS (March 2025) & HEA dashboard data 2023/24 | 2023/24: 16,089<br>73.5% of total taught enrolments (21,879 FTE) | Maintain share of national FTUG enrolments at 10% based on headcount (17,522 in 2022/23) | **10% (17,085) of 172,830 (FT count)** | **16,997**<br>**74.6% of 22,781** | **16,898**<br>**74.8% of 22,577** | 17,330<br>74.3% of 23,321 | 17,844<br>73.7% of 24,206 | 18,561<br>73.9% of 25,199 | **15% growth**<br>**(+2,472 FTE)**<br>**0.4 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **1.2** | **Full-time postgraduate** | HEA SRS (March 2025) | 2023/24: 600 | Maintain share of national FT | **2.9% (680) of 23,535** | **695** | **774** | 753 | 811 | 868 | **45% growth** |

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **taught student enrolments as a proportion of total taught enrolments (FTE)** | & HEA dashboard data 2023/24 | 2.7% of total taught enrolments (21,879 FTE) | PGT enrolments at 3% based on headcount<br>(626 in 2022/23) | **(FT count)** | **3.1% of 22,781** | **3.4% of 22,577** | 3.2% of 23,321 | 3.3% of 24,206 | 3.4% of 25,199 | **(+268 FTE)**<br>**0.7 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **1.3** | **Part-time undergraduate and postgraduate taught student enrolments as a proportion of total taught enrolments (FTE) (excluding craft apprenticeships)** | HEA SRS (March 2025) & HEA dashboard data 2023/24 | 2023/24: 4,335 FTE<br>19.8% of total taught enrolments (21,879 FTE) | Maintain share of national PT UG & PG Taught enrolments (excluding craft apprenticeship) based on headcount (11% in 2022/23) | **10.2% (5,840) of 57,285 (PT count)** | **4,261**<br>**18.7% of 22,781** | **4,088**<br>**18.1% of 22,577** | 4,340<br>18.6% of 23,321 | 4,400<br>18.2% of 24,206 | 4,468<br>17.8% of 25,199 | **3.1% growth**<br>**(+133 FTE)**<br>**2 p.p decrease on baseline** |
| **1.4** | **Craft apprenticeship enrolments as a proportion (%) of total taught student enrolments (FTE)** | HEA SRS (March 2025) & HEA dashboard data 2023/24 | 2023/24: 838 FTE<br>3.8% of total taught enrolments (21,879 FTE) | Maintain share of national craft apprenticeship (20% in 2021/22) | **20% (1,675) of 8,445 (count)** | **833**<br>**3.7% of 22,781** | **816**<br>**3.6 % of 22,577** | 898<br>3.9% of 23,321 | 1,150<br>4.8% of 24,206 | 1,222<br>4.9% of 25,199 | **45.8% growth**<br>**(+384 FTE)**<br>**1.1 p.p. 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.5** | **Non-EU fee paying students (undergraduate & postgraduate) as a proportion (%) of total full-time taught student enrolments (FTE)** | HEA SRS (March 2025) & HEA dashboard data 2023/24 | 2023/24: 596 FTE<br>3.6% of total FT taught enrolments (16,689 FTE) | Maintain share of national non-EU fee-paying students, 3.5% based on headcount (823 in 2022/23) | **2.5% share of national non-EU fee-paying students in 2023/24**<br>**(635/25,615)** | **802**<br>**4.5% of 17,692** | **714**<br>**4% of 17,672** | 1,042<br>5.8% of 18,083 | 1,231<br>6.6% of 18,655 | 1,421<br>7.3% of 19,429 | **138.4% growth**<br>**(+825 students)**<br>**3.7 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **1.6** | **Non-progression rate (%) by NFQ level** | Results: HEA SRS, (March 2024, 2025) for New Entrants 2023/24 Benchmark: HEA Progression & Completion Report 2025, New Entrants 2022/23 | TU Dublin<br>In 2021/22:<br>L6: 21%<br>L7: 35%<br>L8: 21%<br>All: 24% | Achieve rates in line with National Average. In 2021/22:<br>L6: 24%<br>L7: 31%<br>L8: 13%<br>All: 15% | **National average L6: 24%**<br>**L7: 27%**<br>**L8: 11%**<br>**All levels: 13%**<br><br>**TU average**<br>**L6: 24%**<br>**L7: 26%**<br>**L8: 16%**<br>**All levels: 19%** | **L6: 21%**<br>**L7: 35%**<br>**L8: 21%**<br>**All: 19%** | **L6: 27%**<br>**L7: 27%**<br>**L8: 16 %**<br>**All: 19%** | L6: 21%<br>L7: 35%<br>L8: 20% | L6: 20%<br>L7: 33%<br>L8: 18% | L6: 20%<br>L7: 31%<br>L8: 16% | **L6: +1p.p. progression**<br>**L7: +4p.p. progression**<br>**L8: +5p.p. progression** |

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.7** | **Student Satisfaction rate as determined by survey question "Would you recommend your programme to another person?"** | TU Dublin Annual Student Survey 2025 | 2023/24: 83.6% | Comparable questions in ISSE Survey (when relaunched) | **N/A** | **83.5%** | **85.1%** | 84.0% | 84.5% | 85.0% | **Increase of 1.5%. in satisfaction measure** |

**Technical note on indicator data for PO 1:**

1.1 The baseline figure of 16,722 for full-time undergraduate (FTUG) students was changed to 16,089, due to a change in treatment of the overseas student cohorts and to ensure consistency going forward. The corresponding figure for total taught enrolments = 21,879 FTE – FTUG as % total taught enrolments = 73.5%. This does not affect future targets.

1.5 The baseline figure was changed from *all taught enrolments* to *full-time taught student enrolments*. Targets are maintained, and non-EU students are expressed as a *% full-time taught student enrolments* in the table above.

1.6 Non-progression figures for 'all levels' (6, 7 and 8) are now included to facilitate comparison. Also, the baseline figure does not include transfers. As most recent internal data does not include transfers, for consistency we do not include transfers in the benchmark data for non-progression.

1.7 StudentSurvey.ie paused its taught student survey in 2024 and 2025 to undertake a Strategic Review. Reporting on indicators that draw on StudentSurvey.ie results will recommence in 2026. Where the relevant survey questions have changed, indicators will be updated accordingly.

(Word Count: 300)

# Performance Objective 2

**To ensure that all staff and students engage in sustainability education and training to equip them with the appropriate knowledge, skills and tools to help address the sustainability agenda effectively.**

**Transversal areas of impact:** Climate & Sustainable Development; Society; 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2.1** | **Percentage (%) of modules that are defined as sustainability-focused or sustainability inclusive** | TU Dublin Programme & Module Catalogue (2025) | 5.5% 402/7314 modules [1] (Jan 2024) | Universities that received gold and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 5%-20% | **5–20%** | **7% (512/ 7,314)[2]** | **37% (2,677/ 7,314)** | 10% (731/ 7,314) | 13% (950/ 7,314) | 15% (1,097/ 7,314) | **9.5 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **2.2** | **Percentage (%) of Schools with at least one sustainability-focused or -inclusive module in their academic programmes** | TU Dublin Programme & Module Catalogue (2025) | 25% (6/24 Schools) | Universities that received gold and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 50–90% | **50–90%** | **29%** | **100%** | 42% (10) | 58% (14) | 75% (18) | **50 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **2.3** | **Percentage (%) (cumulative) of** | Staff Training & | 4% (105/ | Universities that received gold | **38–75%** | **5% (131/** | **13% (342/** | 25% | 50% (1,313/ | 75% | **71 p.p. increase on** |

[1] When our integrated SRMS is introduced in Sept 2025, this will link with the PMC and allow us to track modules that are active (rather than approved) to facilitate greater accuracy. Our targets will still apply but the number of modules will change.

[2] To facilitate measurement, we will use the same 7,314 approved modules and monitor changes in the dataset over the 4-year period.

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **academic and non-academic staff engaging in sustainability education, professional development and/or training** | Development records (2024/25) | 2,626)[3] | and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 38%-75% | | **2,626)** | **2,709)** | (656/ 2,626) | 2,626) | (1,965/ 2,626) | **baseline (+1,860)** |
| **2.4** | **Percentage (%) of students who complete the Sulitest** | Sulitest Platform (2022/23 – 2024/25) | 2022/23: 4.3% (962 students/ 22,087) All Students, Taught FTE | Universities that received platinum STARS Awards typically have >15% to 75% complete the Sulitest or equivalent assessment | **15–75%** | **5% (1,155/ 23,109)** | **5% (1,187/ 22,577)** | 10% (2367/ 23,674) | 15% (3711/ 24,741) | 20% (5,135/ 25,675) | **16 p.p. increase on baseline (+4,173)** |

**Technical note on indicator data for PO 2**

2.1 A new AI model has been used to capture the 2025 data—this identified 2,677 modules as relevant to the metric (37%).
2.2 This indicator measures the percentage (%) of Schools with at least one sustainability–focused or inclusive module in their academic programmes. The result for 2024/25 is 100%, which exceeds the final target.

[3] Total staff of 2,626 (FTE) at Q4 2023, ECF staff return to the HEA. We expect this number to remain relatively constant over the period but will adjust accordingly. The baseline of 105 relates to the number of staff who completed Climate Action Leadership Training and Education for Sustainability Digital Badges (a six-week programme).

# Pillar: Research & Innovation

## Performance Objective 3

**To grow research activity by 2028 so that 23% (25%)[4] of our academic staff are research active and that postgraduate research student enrolments represent 4.5% (6.5%) of L8-L10 enrolments.**

**Transversal areas of impact:** Climate & Sustainable Development; 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3.1** | **Proportion (%) of academic staff who are research active** | Staff data from Q4 Staff Return to HEA (Dec' 2024) | 21% as of Dec 2022 (271 from a total of 1,305 full-time academic staff) | Comparative data difficult, as there is no consistent definition of 'research active' across HEIs | **N/A** | **21.0% (271)** | **18.2% (230/ 1,263)** | 21.5% (281) | 22.0% (287) | 23% (300) | **23% as of Dec 2028 2 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **3.2** | **Proportion of Postgraduate Research Students** | HEA SRS (March 2025) & HEA | 4% as of March 2023 (679 | TU Sector Average (4% in | **4.1%** | **4.0% (658)** | **3.7% (676/ 18,158)** | 4.2% (686) | 4.5% (764) | 4.5% (867) | **4.5% as of March 2028 0.5 p.p. increase on** |

[4] Two sets of targets are included here (as per the TU Dublin Strategic Plan 2024–2028). Stretch targets are in brackets and are contingent on the lifting of current constraints for Irish TUs and implementation in 2024/25 of a new workload model and career framework for the TU sector in line with the recommendations in the OECD report.

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **enrolled as a % of total enrolments, L8–L10** | dashboard data 2023/24 | Students ) | 2022/23) | | | | | | | **baseline** |
| 3.3 | **Average time to completion for full-time PhD/DMus candidates** | Internal SRMS (June 2025) | Average 4.9 years for those submitting theses in academic year 2023/24 | 3.5–4.5 years<br>EUA CDE 2019 Report (Ref: footnote 16) | **3.5–4.5 years**<br>**EUA CDE 2019 Report** | **4.8 years** | **4.4 years** | 4.7 years | 4.6 years | 4.5 years | **Reduction of on average 0.4 years for time to completion in respect of the baseline** |
| 3.4 | **Proportion (%) of PhD/DMus students who submit theses that have completed within 6 years** | Internal SRMS (June 2025) | 2023/24: 86% | None available | **N/A** | **87%** | **89%** | 88% | 89% | 90% | **90% as of Aug 2028**<br>**4 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| 3.5 | **Proportion (%) of full-time Postgraduate Research Students who successfully complete** | Internal SRMS (June 2025) | To be determined at end of 2026/27 | 66%<br>EUA CDE 2019 Report (Ref: footnote 16) | **66%**<br>**EUA CDE 2019 Report** | **Not available** | **Not Available** | Not available | 68% | 69% | **To be provided once baseline is available** |

# Pillar: Access & Participation

## Performance Objective 4

**To maintain our leadership in supporting equitable access, participation and success in higher education.**

**Transversal areas of impact:** Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Student Success; Society; 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4.1** | **Proportion (%) of new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas** | HEA SRS (March 2025), HEA dashboard data 2023/24; HEA Socio-Economic Profiles – DIS Groups by Institute dashboard | 2020/21: 12.8% | Average, all HEIs (11% in 2020/21) | **10%** | **13%** | **12%** | 13.5% | 13.7% | 14% | **1.2 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **4.2** | **Proportion (%) of mature new entrants from disadvantaged areas as a % of all disadvantaged new entrants** | HEA SRS & Data from HEA Statistics unit, 2023/24 New Entrants | 2021/22: 8% | Average, all HEIs (10% in 2021/22) | **9%** | **18%** | **4%** | 18.5% | 19% | 20% | **2 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **4.3** | **Proportion (%) of new entrants with a disability** | Equal Access Survey 2024/25, HEA SRS (March 2025) & HEA dashboard data 2023/24 | 2022/23: 16.2% | Average, all HEIs (13.9% in 2022/23) | **15%** | **16.4%** | **16.8%** | 16.6% | 16.7% | 17% | **0.8 p.p. 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4.4** | **Non-Progression rate (%) new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged** | HEA SRS (March 2025) & HEA Progression and Completion Report 2025, New Entrants 2022/23 progression in 2024/25 | 2019/20: 17.5% | Average rate for all HEIs (12% in 2020/21) and TUs (19% in 2020/21)<br>Benchmark for TU Dublin in 2022/3 from geo-coding data tbc. | **All HEIs: 16%**<br>**TUs: 21%** | **17.5%** | **21%** | 17% | 16.5% | 16% | **1.5 p.p. decrease on baseline** |
| **4.5** | **Progression rate (%) for students with disabilities** | HEA SRS, Equal Access Survey 2024/25 & Data from HEA Statistics unit, New Entrants 2022/23 progression in 2024/25 | 2022/23: 75 % | Not Available | **All HEIs: 86%**<br>**TUs: 80%** | **85%** | **80%** | 85% | 86% | 86% | **1 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **4.6** | **Proportion (%) of new entrants from FE** | HEA SRS, Access Data Dashboard, 2023/24 New Entrants | 2022/23: 6.2% (312 students) | Average, all HEIs<br>(4.5% in 2022/23) | **5.3%** | **6.3%**<br>**(335)** | **9.7%**<br>**(527)** | 6.4%<br>(350) | 6.5%<br>(380) | 7%<br>(400) | **0.8 p.p. increase on baseline** |

**Technical note on indicator data for PO 4:**

4.2 The original figures provided were just for '% mature new entrants who are from socio-economically disadvantaged areas'. With easier access to the data, it is now proposed to use 'disadvantaged mature new entrants as a % of all disadvantaged new entrants'. Therefore, for the 2020/21 baseline, the proportion would read as 8%, rather than 18%, and the benchmark would read as 10%. Targets to be adjusted appropriately.

4.4 The 2022/23 benchmarks for non-progression for socio-economic disadvantage has now been confirmed - these figures include transfers (as per the revised HEA methodology). Nationally, rates of non-progression have increased since the original baseline was established during COVID (2019/20).

4.5 The 80% figure for the 2024/25 result is from the Equal Access Survey (EAS), not from the FSD data, as was used for the original baseline. The EAS is the source used by the HEA and provides a more appropriate comparative data source.

# Pillar: Engagement

## Performance Objective 5

**To grow knowledge transfer activity so as to achieve a position of top three performer nationally in 2028 in terms of the number of licences granted and spin outs created.**

**Transversal areas of impact:** Climate & Sustainable Development; 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5.1** | **Number of licence agreements executed** | KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2024 | 2022: 10 | Average across Dublin Region Unis + TUs (11 in 2022) | **10.4** | **15** | **11** | 15 | 17 | 18 | **65 new licence agreements over 4 years** |
| **5.2** | **Number of spin-outs established** | KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2024 | 2022: 1 | Average across Dublin Region Unis + TUs (1.8 in 2022) | **1.8** | **2** | **3** | 2 | 3 | 3 | **10 new spin outs over 4 years** |

# Performance Objective 6

**To build an inclusive culture, promote equality, prevent discrimination, and protect the human rights of staff, students, and everyone in TU Dublin through the successful delivery of our Athena Swan Action Plan.**

**Transversal areas of impact:** Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Society; 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **6.1** | **Proportion (%) of staff that believe TU Dublin has an equitable and inclusive culture5** | TU Dublin Employee Engagement Survey, May 2025 | May 2024: 75% | Average result amongst universities, as per source database in employee survey (78% in May 2024) | **71%** | **75%** | **78%** | 76% | 77% | 78% | **78%**<br>**3 p.p. increase on baseline** |
| **6.2** | **Achievement of renewed Institutional Athena Swan Bronze award** | Athena Swan Ireland, April 2025 | 2022/23: Institutional Bronze award achieved | Only one university (MU) had renewed its Bronze award by Nov 2023 | **14 out of 20 HEIs hold an Institutional Bronze award** | **Prepare Application** | **Application progressed and to be submitted in Dec 2025** | Bronze renewal | | | **Renewal of Institutional Athena SWAN Bronze award** |

[5] This indicator is based on data from two questions in the staff survey: (i) People at TU Dublin treat each other with dignity and respect regardless of their personal identities, and (ii) I can be myself at work without worrying about being accepted. The baseline is the combined score from both questions, as noted above.

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **6.3** | **Proportion (%) of schools with Athena Swan Bronze awards** | Athena Swan Ireland, April 2025 | 2022/23: 1 Bronze award at Departmental level<br>4% of TU Dublin Schools | Dublin Universities average, and SETU | **Dublin universities: 40%**<br>**SETU: 1 Faculty and 2 schools** | **27%**<br>**1 Faculty 1 School** | **4%**<br>**Progress Delayed** | 31%<br>1 School | 46%<br>1 Faculty<br>1 School | 61%<br>1 Faculty<br>1 School | **61% of TU Dublin Schools with Athena Swan Bronze Awards**<br>**3 new Faculties and 7 new Schools** |

# 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

**Institutional Strategy**

TU Dublin's Strategic Plan 2024–2028 aligns with the HEA System Performance Framework 2024–2028 and the University's Financial Recovery Plan. The overarching strategy is to grow student enrolments and regain financial sustainability. Strategic and financial planning, and implementation, have been focused on these goals.

**Organisation Matters**

Following interim arrangements during 2024, new appointments were made to the University Executive Team in the academic year 2024/2025. **Dr Deirdre Lillis** was appointed as President from January 2025. Other senior appointments included:

- The Chief Financial Officer
- The Chief Recovery Officer
- Interim Dean of Engineering & Built Environment
- An interim Chief Operations Officer *(commencing September 2025).*

The new Chief Information Officer was also appointed in December 2024. In 2025, Dr Charles Larkin's period as Chair of Governing Body expired, and Eoin O'Shea BL, took up the role of Interim Chair until the vacancy is filled.

The President and Governing Body are committed to enhancing university executive structures and have endorsed a significant programme of work to strengthen TU Dublin's executive structures and processes.

**Institutional Profile**

The University's institutional profile has remained relatively stable, although some advances may gain further momentum in the next few years. FTUG student numbers are strong and are expected to increase further. FTPG student numbers are also increasing. The number of part–time students on the other hand has been declining. This is also a national trend, but market research conducted by TU Dublin has signposted areas of focus for the University, to regain enrolment numbers as it moves forward. The ability to move resources to optimise such opportunities will be key.

The proportion of FTUG students at levels 6, 7 and 8 is also changing — with L8 increasing relatively, due to increased provision at L8 in the marketplace and increased student expectations for L8 places. This of course has knock-on effects on progression, which can be seen in the data.

International student numbers are increasing due to targeted recruitment efforts. While the enrolment numbers for 2024/25 fell short of the target, it is expected that the groundwork put in place and an updated international marketing plan will drive further growth in this area.

Research objectives continue to be challenging. While TU Dublin has been successful in maintaining research student enrolments, the ambitions by the University, and the TU sector, to grow these numbers and research activity more generally, is stymied by slow progress on implementation of the OECD recommendations.

**Data Matters**

In 2024/25, TU Dublin advanced its institutional data processes through: (1) the introduction of a *single, unified* upgraded SRMS system, and (2) the launch of a Data Reporting Project to enhance reporting and strengthen data governance, with a dedicated project manager to drive improvements in the consistency, accuracy, and accessibility of institutional reporting. It is hoped that a collaborative application under the TEF fund will enable further enhancement of data collection and comparative evaluation within the TU sector.

**Modifications**

Addressed mainly in the technical notes, there are suggested modifications to indicators 1.5, 2.2, 4.2 and 4.4. [Word Count: 500]

# Section 2: Evaluation of Performance

Provide an evaluation of the institution's performance in relation to each 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 grow University enrolments through our transformative education, attracting new and diverse students, with a target to grow total student enrolments by 12%.**

**Transversal areas of impact:**

**Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; International.**

**Analysis of Data**

In 2024/25, TU Dublin succeeded in growing total student enrolments by 3%, while simultaneously enhancing the student learning experience and improving total progression rates.

**1.1** The growth target for FTUG students was met — growth of 5% — and market share maintained at 10%.

**1.2** The growth target for FTPG(T) students was exceeded.

**1.3** The target for part–time (UG&PG) students fell short by 173 students (18.1% vs target of 18.7%, as a % of total taught enrolments). Nationally, part–time student numbers also continue to decline. Indicators from DFHERIS (2024) show a continued decline in students studying on a flexible/part-time basis but an increase in remote learning.[6] Compared to other HEIs, TU Dublin has not yet fully implemented its remote/online offering.

**1.4** TU Dublin's share of national craft apprenticeships was maintained at 20%. Whilst the number of apprenticeship blocks was as estimated, the number of students (816 FTE) was slightly below the target of 833, representing 3.6% of total taught student enrolments (FTE).

**1.5** Non–EU students increased from 596 to 714, but below the ambitious target of 802 (+35%). However, the increase in non-EU students (+ 20%) is a significant improvement and indicative of an upward trend. Market share decreased from 3.5% to 2.5%, due to the continued relative growth achieved by other HEIs.

**1.6** TU Dublin exceeded the targeted non-progression rates for L7 and L8, but not L6. The rate of non-progression for all levels (6,7 and 8) was 19%, an improvement on the baseline figure (24%). Comparatively, the rate of non-progression for L6, 7 and 8 was 19% (for TUs) and 16% (all HEIs). The HEA's 2025 Report shows that rates of non-progression are higher

[6] Education Indicators for Ireland -Prepared by DFHERIS (Government of Ireland, March 2024).

in STEM disciplines and among socio-economic disadvantaged (SED) students, both significant features of TU Dublin's student profile. Almost 50% of TU Dublin's students are in STEM disciplines and it has a higher percentage of SED students compared to other Dublin region HEIs.

**1.7** TU Dublin exceeded the target for student satisfaction. Based on the 2024/25 annual TU Dublin survey, the result was 85% compared to a baseline of 83.6% (2023/24). ISSE will be used as the external benchmark when it is resumes.

**Assessment of Implementation**

Various measures and interventions were adopted to achieve the goals, as identified in the TU Dublin Strategic Plan and Financial Recovery Plan. Key high-level actions were implemented in recruitment (including international recruitment), increased investment in branding and brand awareness, in targeted and timely advertising campaigns in the Dublin region, and increased engagement with Further Education and the development of our programme portfolio.

The success of these interventions is reflected in the growth in student numbers, especially FTUG students, FTPG (taught) student enrolments and our research students. A programme portfolio review is ongoing, guided by clearly defined criteria, such as market demand, programme viability, student/staff ratios, mode of delivery and identification of growth opportunities.

The decline in PT student numbers reflects a general trend nationally, with significant changes in this market occurring since the pandemic. TU Dublin is traditionally a leader in this area and conducted market research during the year to assess what options it could take to regain part-time enrolment numbers. The research indicates that there are particular segments that would be a good fit for TU Dublin. These are currently being explored, with the aim of enhancing the focus on growing part-time enrolments in these segments for next year and following years.

A major focus for the University was on international student enrolments. While a range of actions were taken during the year, they really only formed the foundation for future years' success. An updated marketing plan is now in place to support and build on these actions.

**Strategic reflection**

The increase in TU Dublin's FTUG students is significant and reflects a 3.7% increase in the number of new entrants, alongside higher rates of progression, which will have a positive cumulative impact on our student numbers in the coming years.

TU Dublin exceeded the growth target for FTPG(T) students — 774 versus a target of 695. This was driven by a higher UG to PG(T) transition and increased non-EU FT postgraduate students, who now represent 50% of TU Dublin's FTPG students. This growth trajectory is expected to continue, supported by the introduction of new international student marketing campaigns for the 2025/26+ intakes.

Growing TU Dublin's part-time student numbers will continue to be a challenge, particularly in this changing market. However, the market research conducted identifies opportunities, including through delivery of online/blended learning. TU Dublin has invested in technology to support online provision in recent years and now needs to accelerate training of staff and online instructional design support to optimise these new opportunities.

Expansion of apprenticeship provision in TU Dublin is contingent on additional facilities and resources. The University awaits approval from the HEA on capital funding (for refurbishment and fit-out of facilities), and approval for additional staffing.[7]

The numbers of international students recruited in the year fell short of the ambitious target set. This can be attributed to the time required to see the impact of actions taken. Therefore, a slower growth trajectory would realistically reflect the University's ability to achieve the enrolment numbers (by effectively pushing out the targets by one year).

While rates of non-progression have improved at L7 and L8, further progress remains as a strategic priority. TU Dublin's programme quality reviews have identified measures to assist in this, including through enhanced support for students repeating examinations.

TU Dublin is a practice-based and enterprise–engaged institution. Recent research conducted by the University[8] found that TU Dublin's industry network, strong enterprise connections, and emphasis on practice-based education, continue to serve as key differentiators for the University.

[Word count: 981]

**Performance Objective 2**

**To ensure that all staff and students engage in sustainability education and training to equip them with the appropriate knowledge, skills and tools to help address the sustainability agenda effectively.**

**Transversal areas of impact:**

**Climate & Sustainable Development; Society; Institutional Leadership & Culture.**

**Analysis of Indicator Data**

This objective focuses on advancing TU Dublin's sustainability goals, and significant progress was made in 2024/25 during the TU Dublin's AASHE STARS certification process.

[7] Aligned to the *National Apprenticeship Progress Report 2023 and Plan 2024* (GOI, Feb 2024).

[8] *Harnessing Potential: Understanding the part-time professional learner and the enterprise upskilling landscape* (Internal report, May 2025)

A summary of performance is presented below.

**2.1** TU Dublin exceeded the target of 7% of modules that are defined as sustainability-focused or sustainability inclusive. In 2025, TU Dublin implemented a new AI model, which identified 2,677 modules as sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive (37%). This exceeded the target; however, ongoing refinement of the model is underway. The upcoming integration of the Student Records Management System (SRMS) with the Programme & Module Catalogue (PMC) (scheduled for September 2025) will enable measurement of active modules rather than approved modules, allowing for more accurate baseline and targets.

**2.2** This indicator measures the percentage (%) of Schools with at least one sustainability-focused or inclusive module in their academic programmes. The result for 2024/25 is 100%, which exceeds the final target.

**2.3** The target was 5% (cumulative) of academic and non-academic staff that have engaged in sustainability education, professional development and/or training. The result was 13% and progress on this metric indicates the target of 25% in 2025/6 will be met. Universities with gold and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 38%-75%.

**2.4** The target of 5% was met with 5.3% (1,187 students) completing the Sulitest. Universities with platinum STARS Awards typically have between 15% and 75% of students completing the Sulitest or equivalent assessment. The target for next year is unchanged at 10%.

**Assessment of Implementation**

In embedding 'Education for Sustainable Development' across the curriculum, TU Dublin has taken a strategic approach that has been supported by funding under N-TUTORR and SATLE. A major focus has been ensuring academic policy supports and encourages the embedding of sustainability in programmes. This has been achieved through the approval by Academic Council of Sustainability as one of the three core TU Dublin Graduate Attributes; the adoption by Academic Council of a Sustainability Education Policy; and using the Quality Enhancement processes for validations and programme reviews to ensure that sustainability is being taught in a manner that is relevant to the discipline and future careers.

Furthermore, there has been a focus on building capacity of educators and Climate Action leadership training has been rolled out to staff at APO level and above, including academic staff at equivalent levels. The CPD programme in Educating for Sustainability was delivered again in 2025. Over 120 TU Dublin academic staff have now completed these CPDs. In the past two years 60 TU Dublin staff completed the Digital Badge 'Introduction to Education for Sustainability', which is hosted on the National Forum opencourses.ie. In 2024/25, the Sustainability Education team delivered 48 workshops/ presentations to 980 educators in TU Dublin. A limitation, identified in the current process, is that the recording of attendees at these events identified headcount, but did not allow for the identification of staff who may have attended two or more workshops. In 2025/26 this will be addressed, and an online training offering will also be

developed. TU Dublin also developed an online Sustainability Education toolkit – this was accessed 2,200 times last year.

In 2024/25, the Sulitest (indicator 2.4), a UN recognised test of Sustainability Literacy, was delivered to 1,187 TU Dublin students. This brings the cumulative total of TU Dublin staff and students who have completed the Sulitest to 5,000. In 2024, TU Dublin collaborated with Sulitest to review and localise the test questions for an Irish audience. Additionally, an engaging sustainability session was delivered to 6,000 incoming students during orientation to introduce them to sustainability in TU Dublin. According to the First Year Survey, 86% of students recalled the Sustainability presentation. Of these, 73% of students said the presentation was relevant to them, and 72% said they would recommend the presentation to a friend.

**Reflection**

TU Dublin's performance in 2024/25 demonstrates a significant leap forward in embedding sustainability across its academic and operational landscape. The institution exceeded all four key performance indicators (KPIs) related to sustainability education, reflecting a deep institutional commitment and strategic alignment with global best practices such as the AASHE STARS framework.

The use of AI to identify sustainability–focused modules (37%) far surpassed the initial 7% target, showcasing the value of data intelligence but highlights the need for integration to take advantage of these tools. The upcoming integration of the Student Records Management System (SRMS) with the Programme & Module Catalogue (PMC) will enable more precise tracking of active modules, enhancing future target-setting and performance monitoring.

The institution's emphasis on embedding sustainability into academic policy — through the adoption of Sustainability as a core Graduate Attribute and the Sustainability Education Policy — ensures long-term structural support for sustainability education. These policies are reinforced through validation and review processes, ensuring relevance to disciplines and future careers.

TU Dublin's recognition as the first Centre for Sustainability Across the Curriculum in Europe is a testament to its leadership and innovation in this space. This milestone is shaping future policy and investment decisions, including capacity-building initiatives and curriculum development.

The success of action research and sustainability projects, supported by N–TUTORR and SATLE funding, has created a feedback loop where practice informs policy, and policy drives further innovation. The rollout of Climate Action leadership training and CPD programmes for educators is a strategic move to embed sustainability thinking across all levels of the institution.

[Word Count: 893]

# Pillar: Research & Innovation

**Performance Objective 3**

**To grow research activity by 2028 so that 23% (25%)[9] of our academic staff are research active and that postgraduate research student enrolments represent 4.5% (6.5%) of L8-L10 enrolments.**

**Transversal areas of impact:**

**Climate & Sustainable Development; Enterprise; Region.**

**Analysis of Indicator Data**

The indicator data presents a mixed picture of progress towards the Research & Innovation Objective

The number of **research active academic** staff (as measured on 31/12/2024) is behind target, with an out-turn of 230 versus a target of 271. In overall percentage terms this is 18.2% of the 1,263 academic staff, whereas the target was 21%.

The drop of 41 research active staff is a combination of:

1) staff leaving the university to take up a position elsewhere
2) staff retiring from the University, who are not counted in the research active category, although some remained research active as Emeritus/Emerita Fellows
3) staff remaining in the University but who fall out of the research-active criteria

During 2024, 20 research active staff left the university. Of these, 6 retired and remained active as Emeritus/Emerita Fellows. Regarding the other 14, a number joined pre-2019 universities in the Dublin region, to access an academic workload model that is more supportive of research activity and/or to access promotional opportunities.

The remaining drop–off in research active staff is largely due to postgraduate research students (PGRs), who were supervised by these staff, completing their programmes — those staff had not yet secured funds to recruit additional PGRs.

The overall number of PGRs was 676, higher than the target of 658. However, the ratio of L9&10 (R)/L8, 9 & 10, has remained broadly stable at 3.7% versus the target of 4%. This is due to the equal increase in the denominator from 17,835 to 18,158.

The preliminary out–turns for the indicator relating to PGR completion rates is very positive, with a time to completion for PhD/DMus students of 4.4 years, down from the baseline of 4.9 years. The overall completion rate is 89%, up from the baseline of 86% and ahead of target. However,

[9] Two sets of targets are included here (as per the TU Dublin Strategic Plan 2024–2028). Stretch targets are in brackets and are contingent on the lifting of current constraints for Irish TUs and implementation in 2024/25 of a new workload model and career framework for the TU sector in line with the recommendations in the OECD report.

this data will not be completely finalised until the end of the 2024/25 academic year — i.e. census as of 31 August 2025, to be validated thereafter.

**Effectiveness of Actions**

2024/25 saw further work across the university on the 48 strategic actions outlined in the R&I Strategic Plan 2023–28, the majority of which have either a direct or indirect impact on achieving this performance objective.

A preliminary analysis of the progress against the implementation of the R&I Strategic Plan 2023-28 indicates that as of May 2025, 75% of the strategic actions were either complete or on track, with the remaining at risk, or delayed/not yet started.

While implementation of the actions has led to significant increased research expenditure in TU Dublin, and in significantly increased supports for the R&I community across the university, this is not yet clearly evident in the indicator data.

**Internal/External Factors**

The disappointing performance in terms of the % of research active academic staff reflects significant internal challenges faced by the university as a result of entering the HEA Act Section 64 process during 2024/25 — this led to the implementation of significant cost controls and a prioritisation of initiatives that support increasing university enrolments and income. The consequence of this is that fewer academic staff, in particular junior staff, being afforded time allocations to engage in research and research funding acquisition.

External factors, including the delay in implementation of the OECD recommendations on career frameworks and academic contracts in the TU sector (including TU Professorships) had a significant impact on retention of research active staff, with a number of the University's most promising/successful academic staff leaving the university to join pre-2019 universities in the Dublin region.

**Strategic Reflection**

Implementation of the R&I Strategic Plan 2023-28 is progressing well as the University reaches the mid-point of that strategy's 5-year period. In particular a wide range of new supports for the R&I community have been put in place, including, for example: a new process for ethics approval; a Research Engagement Framework and supports; a Research Impact Framework and supports; an Open Research Support unit team; implementation of the Pure CRIS system (the research information system); the implementation of a new pre-/post- award process in Pure; and implementation of a Research Overheads Dispersal Procedure.

In addition, the ARISE TU-RISE project has ramped up, augmenting our research support teams, and putting in place 5 enterprise engagement teams that will broker new arrangements between our R&I community and enterprises in the Eastern and Midlands region.

The impact of these supports, and of ARISE in particular, is only starting to be felt across the university, with the expectation that this will start to be reflected in the indicator performance for the next Performance Agreement reporting period.

Notwithstanding this, the reduction in research active academic staff, provides a clear signal that the R&I function and schools/faculties need to focus in particular on how to engage more staff, especially staff who have recently joined the university, in securing research funding and supervising PGRs.

[Word count: 805]

# Pillar: Access & Participation

**Performance Objective 4**

**To maintain our leadership in supporting equitable access, participation and success in higher education.**

**Transversal areas of impact:**

**Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Student Success; Society; Region.**

**Analysis of indicator data**

Ambitious targets were set for this objective. TU Dublin's performance was as follows:

**4.1** **Proportion (%) of new entrants (NE) from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas:** This was 12%, which is above the national norm of 10%, but below the target set of 13%.[10] However, the national average fell from 11% in 2022/23 to 10% in 2023/24; therefore, performance is in line with the national trend.

**4.2** **Proportion (%) of mature NEs from disadvantaged areas:** From 2021/22 to 2023/24, the number of mature students in TU Dublin fell from 311 to 207 (-33%), compared to a decline of 17% nationally. The % mature NEs from disadvantaged areas in TU Dublin also fell from 15% to 13% and the '% disadvantaged mature new entrants as a % of all disadvantaged new entrants' declined from 8% to 4% — the national norm for this metric fell from 10% to 9%. The target in the NAP is to reach 20% by 2028 (NAP, p.41).

**4.3** **Proportion (%) NEs with a disability:** This was 16.8%, exceeding the University target of 16.4% and the figure of 15% for all HEIs nationally. TU Dublin also exceeded the final target of 16% in the NAP.

**4.4** **Non-Progression rate (%) NEs from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas:** This was 21%, higher than the rate for all HEIs (16%), but the same as the average for all TUs (21%). The figure of 21% for TU Dublin in 2022/23 establishes a new baseline for the realignment of future targets.

**4.5** **Progression rate for students with disabilities**: In 2024/25, the progression rate for students with disabilities in TU Dublin was 80%. The progression rate for all students in TU Dublin was also 80%. The change in data source for this indicator restricts detailed performance analysis (see Technical note 4.5).

**4.6** **% NEs from Further Education:** This was 9.7% (527 students) in 2024/25, an increase from 6.3% (353) in the previous year, and well above the national norm in 2023/24 of 5.3.

[10] HEA Socio-Economic Profiles 2021/22-2023/24

An overview of TU Dublin's performance within the higher education sector is provided below.

| | Metric | TU Dublin | All HEIs |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4.1** | % NEs from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas | 12% | 10% |
| **4.2** | % mature NEs from disadvantaged areas | 13% | 17% |
| | % mature NEs from disadvantaged areas and marginally below average | 51% | 49% |
| **4.3** | % NEs with a disability | 17% | 16% |
| **4.4** | Non-Progression rate (%) NEs from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas | 21% | 16% |
| **4.5** | Progression rate (%) for students with disabilities | 80% | 86% |
| **4.6** | % NEs from Further Education & Training | 9.7% | 5.3% |

**Assessment of Implementation**

TU Dublin's *National Access Plan Progress Report 2024 to the HEA* provides an overview of how the University advanced the goals of the National Access Plan in 2024. PATH 3 funding allowed the University to establish outreach activities to communities from socio–economic disadvantaged areas and to embed transition from linked DEIS schools and FE colleges, where there is a higher student population from NAP target groups. In 2024, TU Dublin accounted for 25% of all offers made to QQI applicants and the percentage of new entrants from FE increased to 9.7%. This was achieved through a number of ways, including:

- Reviewing and revising/increasing QQI quotas on a per-programme basis, to achieve greater equality across the campuses
- Continuing to make QQI offers as we progress through the CAO rounds, in order to maximise intake.
- Collaboration between professional services and academic staff to support greater collaboration with FE colleges, including through the introduction of tertiary degrees[11]

Various improvements were also implemented in pre–entry and post–entry supports, including for student with disabilities. Initiatives were undertaken to promote universal design, in campus developments, technology, and in teaching and learning.

Among our successful outreach initiatives was the 'Taste of TU Dublin', which was developed through engagement with community partners and supported under PATH 3, with tailored sessions for international protection applicants and refugees.

Future plans for improvement are contained in the *TU Dublin Plan for Access & Participation*

[11]Tertiary Degrees are co-designed and co-delivered by the Education and Training Boards and Higher Education Institutions to provide seamless pathways from Further Education to Higher Education (National Tertiary Office).

*2024-28.*

**Reflection**

Data accessibility and consistency have been constant issues for 'Access' student planning. However, recent work by HEA has greatly enhanced this, resulting in much improved measurement and benchmarking by the universities.

Generally, TU Dublin performed well on this objective. It performed higher than the national average on a number of metrics and met or exceeded the targets set out in the NAP.

While recognising the small absolute number in this cohort (27 students), the mature student indicator is of concern, with a 4% figure vs 9% nationally. It is noted that TU Dublin has a high concentration of programmes in STEM and mature student NEs are less likely to enrol in STEM disciplines (nationally, only 20%). Also, TU Dublin has a high number of total SED students (second highest nationally), which affects the denominator and ratio for this indicator. Additionally, the availability of employment in the Dublin region means that mature adults (>23) are more likely to enter employment and/or study part-time.

Supporting progression among priority groups is a key area of focus for TU Dublin and a dedicated University task group has been established to oversee, co-ordinate and monitor actions to improve rates of progression, including through specific supports for students with disabilities and students from disadvantaged areas. Our research finds that repeat students tend to fail the repeat exams and therefore we plan to enhance supports for repeating students, including extended sessional and summer Maths Learning and Academic Writing Supports, as well as additional academic tuition. These actions are outlined in the TU Dublin Access Plan.

[Word count: 980]

# Pillar: Engagement

**Performance Objective 5**

**To grow knowledge transfer activity so as to achieve a position of top three performer nationally in 2028 in terms of the number of licences granted and spin outs created.**

**Transversal areas of impact:**

Climate & Sustainable Development; Enterprise; Region.

**Analysis of the indicator data**

In terms of the number of licence agreements executed, TU Dublin achieved 73% of the annual target (11 achieved vs. 15 target). For spin–outs established, the target was exceeded by 50%. Comparative data from the AKTS annual survey for 2024, indicates that TU Dublin, when outputs are normalised against reported research expenditure, has maintained a relatively strong performance in the sector.

**Assessment of Implementation**

The progress seen reflects the work of the University knowledge transfer case manager team, the cumulative impact of sustained pipeline–building efforts over recent years, and the innovation-focus of key research teams and individuals within TU Dublin. Several critical developments highlight the strength and maturity of the TU Dublin commercialisation ecosystem:

- **Pipeline Building Success**
  There has been a notable increase in engagement with TU Dublin Innovation Clinics, reflecting growing awareness and interest among researchers. Additionally, the success rate of Enterprise Ireland (EI) Commercialisation Fund (CF) feasibility applications has improved significantly, indicating stronger project readiness and alignment with market needs.
- **Major Commercialisation Fund Award – MEEC Project**
  A standout achievement was TU Dublin's successful application for a €750,000 Commercialisation Fund (CF) award for the SM:ART project (Structural Health Monitoring and Automated Response Treatment for Reinforced Concrete Structures). This project, led by Principal Investigator Dr. Sean Bond, exemplifies the calibre of innovation emerging from the University and the potential for real-world impact. *https://www.tudublin.ie/research-innovation/news/tu-dublin-spin-out-smart-partners-with-northern-ireland-to-trial-innovative-bridge-intelligence-solution.html*
- **Stronger Pathway to HPSU**
  Early–stage supports are increasingly positioning TU Dublin spin–outs for **High Potential Start-Up (HPSU)** status. This reflects a more structured and strategic approach to nurturing ventures from ideation through to investment readiness.
  However, a persistent gap in the availability of early-stage, pre–seed funding—combined

with heightened risk aversion among many established venture capital firms—is creating a significant barrier. This funding shortfall hampers the ability of promising spin–outs to secure the critical initial investment needed to transition innovations from the lab to real-world application.

- **Refined Internal Processes**
  We have made significant strides in improving internal operations. Enhanced engagement strategies, better data tracking through platforms like Minuet and Microsoft Planner, and more streamlined support mechanisms have improved both pre- and post-spin-out experiences for researchers and entrepreneurs.
- **Reduced Administrative Overhead**
  Administrative burdens on researchers have been eased through simplified office processes and improved internal coordination. Notably, the introduction of a marketing consultant procurement process has dramatically accelerated the start times for EI CF feasibility studies—from several months to just a few days—enabling faster project mobilisation and momentum.

**Strategic Reflection**

Several licensing opportunities that were in advanced stages of execution did not close by the end of 2024. These include a significant spin-out foundation licence and a technology evaluation licence, both of which are expected to execute later in 2025.

In 2024, TU Dublin implemented a strategic shift, aimed at prioritising high–value, high–impact licensing opportunities over a higher volume of smaller deals. While this approach resulted in a reduced number of completed transactions, it allowed the University to concentrate efforts on technologies with stronger commercial potential and potential mid-term revenue generation. This focus aligns with the broader objective of maximising value creation from our intellectual property portfolio.

Looking forward, a robust and qualified pipeline of licensing opportunities is already in place, and we anticipate a return to target levels. Our strategic focus continues to be on quality over quantity, ensuring that each agreement contributes meaningfully to our mission and financial sustainability. This approach is designed to maximise the impact of our intellectual property portfolio by aligning with market needs and securing partnerships that offer real–world application and growth potential.

Developing a robust spin–out pipeline requires sustained effort and long–term commitment. Key learnings from our experience include:

- **Resource Intensity**
  Spin–out creation demands significant time and effort from knowledge transfer staff and researchers, often straining resources and requiring careful prioritisation alongside licensing and industry collaboration activities. Balancing these competing priorities can lead to internal tensions requiring continuous monitoring and resource prioritisation over time.

- **Extended Timeframes**
  The spin–out process typically spans over three years, requiring sustained support and motivation. Its longer timelines and higher risk contrast with the quicker returns of licensing and collaborative research. Constant re–assessment of the spin–out opportunity against pre–defined milestones at specific times can monitor performance and provide managerial insights on future resource allocation.
- **Team Formation Challenges**
  A lack of experienced commercial leads continues to delay team development, hindering progress and reducing investor confidence. The Innovation Office are working closely with TU Dublin New Frontiers, Enterprise Ireland Business Partner Programme and TU Dublin networks to identify suitable commercial leads as spin-outs opportunities arise.
- **Personnel Changes**
  Changes in internal staff or Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Specialists can stall momentum, frustrate researchers, and delay funding applications. TU Dublin Innovation have implemented a defined innovation process map, pipeline management and data capture to help overcome disruption associated with staffing changes.

[Word count: 801]

**Performance Objective 6**

**To build an inclusive culture, promote equality, prevent discrimination, and protect the human rights of staff, students, and everyone in TU Dublin through the successful delivery of our Athena Swan Action Plan.**

**Transversal areas of impact:**

**Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Society; Institutional Leadership & Culture.**

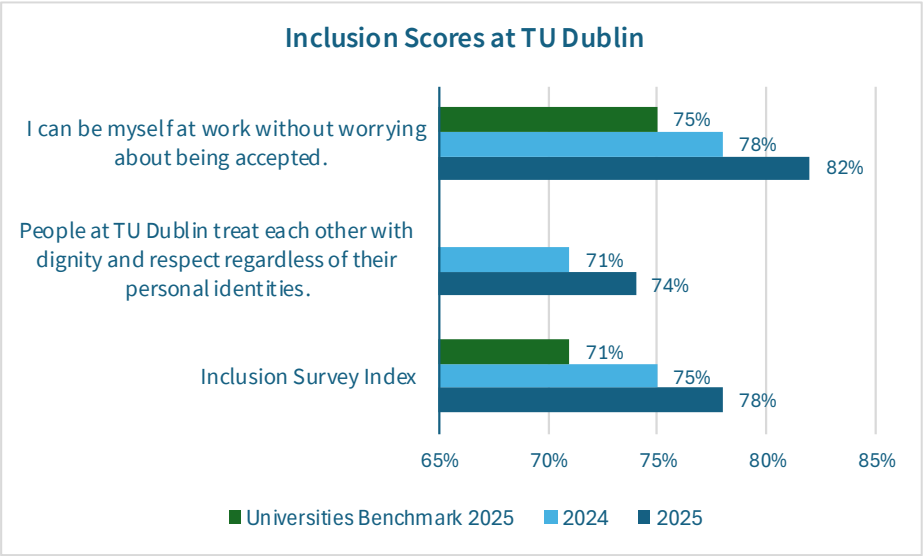
### Analysis of the indicator data

EDI is prioritised in the TU Dublin Strategic Plan 2024–2028. An overarching objective of our EDI ambition and underpinning our Athena Swan action plan, is to support a culture of equity and inclusion within the University. An annual staff survey assesses progress on this objective.

### 6.1 Proportion (%) of staff that believe TU Dublin has an equitable and inclusive culture

Two questions were used in the staff survey to monitor progress (i) People at TU Dublin treat each other with dignity and respect regardless of their personal identities, and (ii) I can be myself at work without worrying about being accepted. The score for (i) was 82% and for (ii) was 74%; together giving a score for 'inclusion' of 75%. This is a 3% increase on last year's score and exceeds our targets.

The combined score of 78% is below the 'Ireland norm' of 87% in 2025 (which includes public and private sector organisations). The university norm (71%) provides a better benchmark; however, this is based solely on question two. TU Dublin consider both questions in the staff survey to be important as indicators of a culture of inclusion, TU Dublin decided to use the combined score for TU Dublin and to benchmark against the university norm (71%). The results are presented below.



**6.2 Achievement of renewed Institutional Athena Swan Bronze award**

TU Dublin's institutional award is valid until the end of 2025. The Institutional Bronze Award renewal application is on track to submit within the November submission window. Results are released within 12 weeks of submission. A self-assessment team (SAT) has been in place since March 2025 and an all–staff survey, a requirement of the process, was issued in June. The SAT continue to monitor and assess the progress of the 2022–2025 action plan. As of September 2025, 14 HEIs hold institutional awards at Bronze level.

**6.3 Proportion (%) of schools with Athena Swan Bronze awards**

TU Dublin has one Bronze award at School Level (the School of Mathematics and Statistics). Within the Dublin region, TCD has 20, UCD (22), DCU (10) and MU (9). SETU is the only TU with 3 awards.

The Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment (EBE) and the School of Media were scheduled for submission in late 2024. Both units were unable to meet these deadlines due to other priority work and staffing issues. Athena Swan Ireland guidance suggests a two-year self-assessment process for Faculty applications, and this led to the Faculty of EBE adjusting their expected submission date to April 2026. This is currently progressing. The School of Media have adjusted their submission date to December 2025 and have an assessment team in place.

The School of Food Science and Environment commenced an application in June 2025, with a provisional submission date of November 2026. The existing award in the School of Mathematics and Statistics is valid until April 2026.

**Implementation Progress**

**6.1** The 3% increase on last year's score exceeds the target for 2024/25. EDI interventions carried out as part of the ESVH, Race equity and Athena Swan action plans have supported this objective. Another key contributor to this was the work carried out by the *Workplace Wellbeing Committee,* focused on breaking stigma, fostering belonging, and building awareness and empathy.

**6.2** The submission of Athena Swan Institutional Bronze Award - the application is currently on track for submission in December 2025. Risks have been identified that could impact the progress and success of the application, as well as School and Faculty applications (indicator 6.3). The team are actively working to mitigate these risks, identified below:

a. **Institutional Application Framework Transition**: The Athena Swan Charter was revised in 2021 and awards extended to 5 years to enable improved monitoring and evaluation of action plans, in advance of the award renewal process. TU Dublin submitted under the pre–2021 framework and remains on the 4–year renewal cycle placing TU Dublin at a relative disadvantage and it may impact timelines.

b. **Athena Swan Faculty Applications**: The original timeline for applications to be submitted was revised on the advice of Athena Swan. The feedback was that the development of faculty applications takes considerable time and therefore submission

dates needed to be pushed out.

c. **EDI Leadership and Resources:** Changes within the EDI Directorate (including the recent retirement of the Director of EDI), may disrupt continuity and impact progress on Athena Swan plans and Athena Swan applications. The number of members on the Self-Assessment Team (SAT) for institutional renewal is also significantly reduced, increasing the workload for individual members.

d. **Action Plan Implementation issues and Priority Actions:** Staffing changes in key functional areas have affected continuity of implementation and some priority actions are only partially complete due to these staffing issues and financial resources.

**Reflection**

The results of the staff survey show progress in the development of an equitable and inclusive culture in TU Dublin, with a 3% improvement and a score that is above the university norm. In July 2025, TU Dublin was officially awarded the University of Sanctuary accreditation. This recognises the University's commitment to welcoming and supporting people seeking sanctuary, such as asylum seekers and refugees, and embedding a culture of inclusion, intercultural awareness, and social justice.

Targets were met in relation to the renewal of the Institutional Bronze Award (assessment team in place, action plan review and staff consultation underway), which is on track for submission in December 2025. Progress of Athena Swan School and Faculty awards is delayed, for the reasons outlined. Expected submissions in 2025/26 are as follows:

- Faculty of Engineering (5 Schools)
- School of Media
- School of Food Science

This would put the University on track to meet the 2025/26 target of 31%.

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# 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.

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TU Dublin's self-evaluation highlights some areas with potential for system learning and policy development.

**Sustainability:** TU Dublin's recognition as the first *Centre for Sustainability Across the Curriculum* in Europe is a testament to its leadership and innovation. TU Dublin adopted a strategic approach to embedding *'Education for Sustainable Development'* across the curriculum. The approach that led to success is outlined under Pillar One: Teaching & Learning (Objective 2). Innovations include the development of a *Sustainability Council*, an *Education for Sustainability Policy*, and the incorporation of sustainability in all programme development and quality reviews.

**Integrated Planning***:* The integration of strategic educational goals and financial sustainability goals is critical to the successful achievement of performance objectives.

**Impact-driven Research:** In terms of research excellence, *TU Dublin's Research Impact Framework* can inform national strategies to prioritise societal and economic research impact.

**Performance Data and Evidence gaps**: Benchmarking remains a valuable tool for performance assessment; however, there are challenges in data availability and comparability, including:

- National enrolment data is presented as headcount rather than FTEs.
- Enrolment data for traditional apprenticeships is not included in HEA data and data on consortium-led apprenticeships is not publicly available.
- Data Comparability. Further clarity, precision and communication is needed across the sector on how the HEA and individual HEIs calculate different metrics.
- Use of Data Sources: HEA disability data is based on the Equal Access Survey rather than FSD data — the latter forms the basis of HEA funding and could be considered a more accurate data source than the EAS.

These insights suggest that future system development could benefit from enhanced sectoral data standards and improved national reporting frameworks. The HEA Performance Agreement process is acknowledged as administratively demanding, but it provides valuable opportunities to identify and share best practice across institutions, supporting collective improvement.

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# 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 **Technological University Dublin**, I declare that the particulars supplied in this report are true and correct. | |
|---|---|
| **Signature:** | Deirdre Lillis |
| **Print Name:** | Dr Deirdre Lillis |
| **Date:** | 26 September 2025 |