



# Healthy Campus Case Study



HEA

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas  
The Higher Education Authority

# Becoming Vape Free – A Whole University Response To E-cigarettes For A Healthy Planet And Healthy People

### Institution/ Organisation

Trinity College Dublin

### Who leads/ led the project?

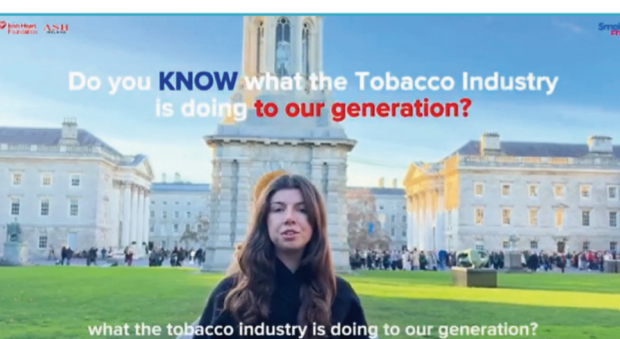
Healthy Trinity: Tobacco Group

### Date and timeframe

2022-2026

### Project Rationale

After a six-year negotiation, Trinity became a tobacco-free campus and showed a 79% reduction in observed smoking from 2016 to 2020. Smoking was observed through a Living Lab approach that employed student Ambassadors to count smokers on campus 6-8 times per week during semester, while reminding them of the tobacco-free policy. Post COVID-19, Ambassadors observed increased vaping but had no remit to approach vapers because the protracted negotiation to become tobacco-free excluded e-cigarettes. Trinity's Sustainability Strategy included the development of an e-cigarettes policy for Trinity under a Healthy Planet, Healthy People ethos.



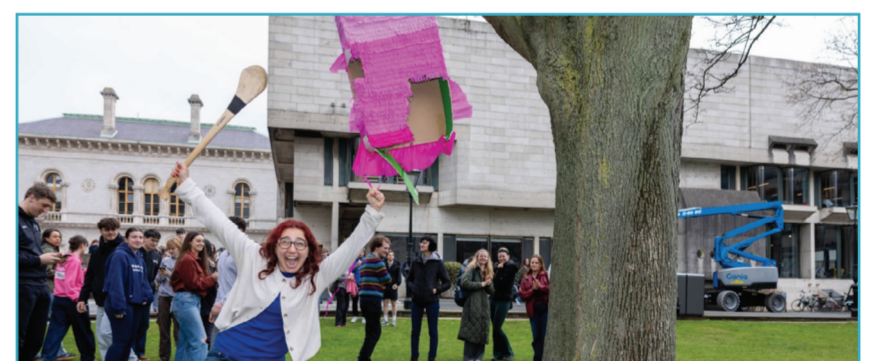
### Project Overview/ Summary

**The Living Lab approach to tobacco-free Trinity already in place was extended to include vaping as follows:**

1. Vaping observed on campus as part of Tobacco Free Trinity's Living Lab found an increase from 0.9 vapers per check (609 checks) in 2022/2023 to 2.1 vapers per check in 2024/2025 (350 checks). In 2024/2025, 1,749 nicotine users were observed on campus, with 42% (n=728) using e-cigarettes. 59% of vapers (n=430) were using disposable vapes.
2. Vaping prevalence survey taken in 2023 by 2,683 students and staff (RR=12%) found vaping is highly prevalent. 1539 (57%) had vaped at least once and 838 (31%) currently vaped. 42% of current vapers were dual cigarette and e-cigarette users. 57%, n=1013, supported on-campus restrictions. Factors for lifetime/current vaping included younger age, undergraduate status, cigarette smoking (AOR current=9.3, 95% CI 6.1, 14.2), and disposable vape use (AOR current = 3.18, 95% CI 1.6, 6.2)
3. Stop-smoking courses were re-designed to be stop-smoking/vaping courses and two per annum were delivered with the HSE Quit team;
4. Student ambassador led anti-vaping communications were launched on social media, on campus screens, email and at events with a focus upstream on politicians and downstream on students
5. 300 students completed anti-vaping assignments through curriculum with a particular focus on policy makers;
6. Three responses to government consultations lobbying for stronger regulation were submitted.
7. An application to extend Trinity's tobacco free campus Living Lab to e-cigarettes was made to Board and on 18th March 2026, Trinity launched its smoke/vape free campus.
8. Implementation continues by student ambassadors completing weekly circuits reminding people of the policy and recording observed smoking/vaping.

### Key Learning Points

1. Governance: Having e-cigarettes as a target in the Sustainability Strategy made obtaining buy-in easier and opened policy channels for change.
2. Research: Working with academic partners enabled research via a prevalence survey.
3. Teaching: Working with academic partners meant >300 students engaged deeply with the emerging trend of e-cigarettes. Students went from thinking that using e-cigarettes was free choice, to understanding it is a highly addictive product sold by the tobacco industry in pursuit of profit.
4. Operations: Working with professional partners enabled improved support for people to quit vaping; extension of the ongoing Living Lab to vaping; vape recycling on campus, ongoing communications on campus and to policy makers.
5. Community: Working with students and professional staff enabled events, communications and data collection with a particular focus on why policy makers have allowed e-cigarettes to proliferate.
6. Whole university approach enabled Trinity as an institution to come to a position on e-cigarettes and to respond to government consultations calling for stronger legislation.



Limerick Framework for Action	Whole Campus Approach	Type of Evaluation
Ethos	Leadership, Strategy & Governance (Pillar 1)	Process Evaluation
Act	Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) (Pillar 2)	Outcome Evaluation
		Summative Evaluation



Trinity College Dublin  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

