



# Healthy Campus Case Study



HEA

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas  
The Higher Education Authority

## UCD's Live Engagement & Attendance Project (LEAP): Using Analytics to Identify At-risk Students and Enable Early Interventions to Improve Engagement and Wellbeing

Institution/ Organisation
University College Dublin
Who leads/ led the project?
UCD Student Advisory Service
Date and timeframe
Ongoing since 2018
Project Rationale
LEAP was established in response to the need for a more proactive, data-informed approach to identifying and supporting students who may be at risk of disengagement.
The twin objectives of LEAP are:
1. To identify students at risk of disengagement, enabling Student Advisers to provide timely, proactive support that can improve student outcomes.
2. To deliver early interventions to students at risk, enhancing student engagement, wellbeing, and retention.



Project Overview/ Summary
<p><b>Planning and Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAP was piloted in 2018/19 in response to a recognised need for earlier identification of students at risk of disengagement and poorer wellbeing outcomes.</li> <li>The project was designed in alignment with national policy, including the National Student Mental Health &amp; Suicide Prevention Framework for Higher Education, and institutional priorities relating to student success, retention, and wellbeing.</li> <li>A cross-functional approach was adopted to ensure a robust, ethical, and data-informed model.</li> <li>Key considerations during planning included data protection, appropriate use of learning analytics, and ensuring that interventions would be supportive, non-intrusive, and student-centred.</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAP was rolled out on a phased basis across different Colleges.</li> <li>The project uses real-time Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) data to monitor student engagement.</li> <li>Students identified as at risk of disengagement are contacted proactively by Student Advisers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This approach enables early, preventative intervention, particularly during key transition periods, and helps bridge the gap between initial orientation messaging and later-stage crisis support.</li> <li>LEAP also contributes to a more integrated support ecosystem, with emerging links identified between VLE engagement and engagement with other campus services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluation and Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project has enabled the clear identification of students at elevated risk of non-progression.</li> <li>Quantitative analysis shows that students flagged through LEAP tend to have lower GPA attainment, higher module failure rates, and increased risk of non-progression.</li> <li>Ongoing evaluation, including analysis linked to institutional initiatives such as student success projects, continues to demonstrate the value of LEAP as both an early intervention tool and a mechanism for enhancing student wellbeing and engagement.</li> <li>LEAP has been recognised nationally as an exemplar initiative in supporting student progression, highlighting its effectiveness and scalability.</li> </ul>

Key Learning Points
<p>A critical learning from the development and implementation of UCD LEAP is the importance of meaningful consultation and strong institutional champions. Early and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, including academic staff, student support services, and students themselves, was essential in building trust, addressing concerns (particularly around data use and data privacy), and ensuring the project was responsive to the needs of its users.</p> <p>Equally important was the role of champions across the institution. Having committed individuals within Colleges, Schools, and student support services who could advocate for LEAP, translate its value in local contexts, and encourage engagement was key to successful rollout and adoption. These champions helped to embed LEAP within existing structures and foster a shared sense of ownership.</p> <p>Given the links between VLE engagement and other student engagement indices noted by the LEAP project team, an additional aspect of stakeholder engagement worth pursuing is identifying existing data streams already available to student support teams that can be adapted to enable real-time interventions, as opposed to procuring or creating a new data stream from scratch.</p> <p>A key recommendation for others is to invest time in relationship-building and communication from the outset. Transparent processes, clear articulation of purpose, and a strong focus on student benefit are essential to securing buy-in and sustaining momentum. Without this foundation, even well-designed, data-informed initiatives may struggle to achieve meaningful impact.</p>

Limerick Framework for Action		Whole Campus Approach	Type of Evaluation
Localise	Students	Leadership, Strategy & Governance (Pillar 1)	Formative Evaluation
Leadership	Research		Process Evaluation
Policies			Outcome Evaluation
			Summative Evaluation

