



Healthy Campus Case Study



HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

The Maynooth University Trails Project

Name of institution and initiative lead

Maynooth University (MU)
The Healthy Campus Steering Group Chair (Dr. Ronan Foley) and the Health Promotion Officer/ Healthy Campus Co-ordinator (Orlagh

Date and timeframe

Project initiated in Academic year 2023 – 2024 and currently ongoing.

What was the reach?

The trails will be available for use by all staff and students, and the wider Maynooth Town community.

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim is to encourage more staff and students to engage in physical activity and nature therapy while on campus for the benefit of their overall health and wellbeing.

In order to achieve this, aim our objectives are to:

Create a categorised system for MU trails that divides them into ‘Information-based’ trails and ‘Wellness-based’ trails.

Streamline the existing two trails at MU by upgrading the current trail markers and colour coding all the trail routes.

Aims and Objectives

Develop two new wellness-based trails – a ‘Nature Connection’ trail and a ‘Mindfulness’ Trail.

Hold a launch event to introduce the new categorised system and the new trails to staff and students, and to provide information and raise awareness of the benefits of movement and spending time in nature.

Aligned frameworks, policies, or strategies

National Healthy Campus Charter and Framework

National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework

Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025

Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Project Collaborators

Two trails had already been developed in MU (the Tairseach Tree Trail by the Froebel School of Education, and a Biodiversity Trail by Green Campus). We worked closely with representatives from both departments in addition to:

MU PHD Psychology Researcher

MU Groundsman

MU Environmental Psychologist

MU Student Services Counselling Representatives

Key Learning Points

The importance and value of a partnership approach to health and wellbeing

– without collaboration between the founders of the original MU trails, the Project Group and the staff/students who engaged in our pilot this project would not be possible. Working in partnership has been good for team building across administrative and academic departments and speaks to a holistic cross-campus approach in planning something that would benefit all; finding a way to connect cross-themes in terms of specific Healthy Campus strategic work and open it up to wider communities of interest.

The importance of evaluation – the piloting event produced valuable feedback and had a genuine buzz; a discovery of potential and a low-cost, potentially wide-impact initiative, but also a meaningful natural resource and asset for students and staff alike, as well as potentially visitors and the town community. We are excited to build on this by engaging in more evaluation to ensure MU Trails are as safe, inclusive, and accessible as possible for our campus community and beyond.

Healthy Campus Process	Whole Campus Approach	Topic	Population Group
Create	Campus Environment (Facilities & Services)	Mental Health & Wellbeing	Students
		Physical Activity / Active Transport	Staff
		Health & Sustainability	Wider community



Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

