**HEA Healthy Campus**  **Case Study**

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| **HEALTHY CAMPUS CASE STUDY** | |
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| **Name of Institution/ Organisation** | Technological University Dublin |
| **Who lead the initiative?** | Healthy Campus and TU Dublin Sport  Sarah Healy & Laura Kestell, Healthy Campus Intern  Dr Teresa Hurley, Healthy Campus Lead  Richard Kelly, Dr Aileen Kennedy, academic supervisors  John Matthews, TU Dublin Sport |
| **Date and timeframe of the initiative** | January 29th – March 22nd 2024 |
| **What was the reach of the initiative?** | 5 Week Couch to 5K Series - 53 sign ups (students & staff)  Celebratory Fun Run- 48 sign ups (students & staff) |
| **Initiative Title** | 5 Week Couch to 5K Walk/Jog Series & Celebratory Fun Run |
| **Aims/ Objectives** | The aim of this 5 Week Couch to 5K Series and Fun Run was to promote physical activity and good nutrition for students and staff at TU Dublin. |
| **The rationale for the action, including any identified health needs.** | Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) pose a significant global health burden, attributing to 74% of deaths worldwide. Unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, such as inadequate physical activity (PA) and poor diet, are major risk factors for NCD’s such as cardiovascular disease, overweight/obesity, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and depression. To reduce the global impact of NCDs, greater effort should be made towards the implementation of healthy lifestyle interventions to educate and encourage physical activity and good nutrition. The transitional period into Higher Education (HE) is a formative stage in life and health behaviours established during this period are usually followed throughout life, impacting future health. Research indicates that students are susceptible to adopting unhealthy behaviours such as decreased PA, increased sedentary behaviour, drug use, binge drinking, and smoking. University students are also often associated with having irregular eating patterns and an increased consumption of fast foods, processed foods, and alcohol, therefore, increasing their risk of overweight and obesity among other NCDs. Research has shown approximately a third of Irish students are inadequately active and only 9% meet PA guidelines.Evidence indicates that 40% of Irish higher education students are overweight or obese.More than 82% of students do not meet the 7 a day guideline for fruit and vegetable intake, with Irish students having a median of 3 servings of fruit and vegetable per day, and many do not meet the guidelines for whole grains. This highlights the need for Healthy Campus interventions in Irish Higher Education Institutes, such as this 5 Week Couch to 5K Series and Fun Run. |
| **Identify all frameworks, policies, or strategies this initiative aligns to**  **(internal, local, or national)** | HEA Healthy Campus Charter and Framework  SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being |
| **Summary** | The Couch to 5K initiative is a popular 9-week fitness programme targeted at beginner runners to promote physical activity (PA). It involves three varied walk/run sessions per week, with the aim of gradually progressing to a 30 minute continuous run by the final week.The National Health Service (NHS) in the UK currently promotes the Couch to 5K programme and offers a free mobile app as a public health intervention to increase PA levels among the population. As part of this initiative, the Couch to 5K programme was adapted from a 9-week programme to a 5-week programme by trained TU Dublin Sport staff and an educational nutritional component was incorporated by the Healthy Campus N-TUTORR Intern event organisers, completing their internship as part of the final year of Public Health Nutrition at TU Dublin. The programme commenced on January 29th, 2024. Participants were emailed weekly with a nutritional fact sheet and workout plan. These were also posted on the TU Dublin Sport Instagram page for the wider TU Dublin community to avail of the resources. The Sport team facilitated lunchtime in-person walk/jog sessions on each campus once a week to promote participation. Participants were also offered three ‘Healthy Eating’ nutrition presentations, by the Healthy Campus Interns. The presentations discussed the basis of a healthy diet and expanded on the information provided in the nutrition fact sheets; with a more in depth focus on the food pyramid, benefits and functions of a healthy diet, portion sizes, healthy tips, and energy balance. Participants were given HSE cookbooks, a copy of the food pyramid and HSE leaflets pertaining to healthy eating and PA. The aim of the presentations and dissemination of the cookbooks and health materials was to educate participants on nutrition and PA and enable them to improve their diet and increase PA, therefore improving their overall health and well-being and reducing the risk of NCDs. The programme culminated with a celebratory 5K Fun Run on the Grangegorman campus. The TU Dublin Sport team led a group warmup and the run, while a DJ from the TU Dublin DJ society played music to promote ethos and motivate participants. Healthy Campus organized and hosted the event and provided a stand where TU Dublin students and staff were provided with free fruit, HSE cookbooks, educational health and well-being leaflets and sustainable ‘goody bags’. Some participants were randomly selected for spot prizes. The Fun Run brought the TU Dublin community together as a social event and promoted PA, nutrition, and sustainability to the campus community. |
| **Did you collaborate with internal and/or external stakeholders to deliver?** | Healthy Campus at TU Dublin, N-TUTORR, TU Dublin Sport, Sustainability at TU Dublin, TU Dublin DJ Society, TU Dublin Public Health Nutrition Programme, HEA Healthy Campus, HSE, TFI. |
| **How was the initiative organised?** | Please include elements such as action planning, piloting, approval for the initiative, committee meetings, timeframes etc.  Action planning:  This event was organised by Healthy Campus in collaboration with TU Dublin Sport. Meetings were held with TU Dublin Sport and Healthy Campus Co-ordinator, as well as academic supervisors to determine a timeframe for the adapted Couch to 5K and what it would consist of, including the additional nutritional component and TU Dublin sport’s provision of workout plans and staff for in-person sessions.  Research:  Researched information for the nutritional component using information provided on the HSE website.  First drafts:  Planned and drafted the first nutritional factsheets and workout plans using information suppled by TU Dublin Sport and sent for approval and feedback from the Healthy Campus Co-ordinator and TU Dublin academic supervisor. These were then edited, and final drafts were approved.  Promotion:  Promotion was created on adobe illustrator to advertise the programme and detailed what was included in the programme, including the nutritional factsheets and talk. A QR code was included in the promotion that linked to a Microsoft form for ease of registration. This was circulated to all TU Dublin students and staff, appeared on all TU Dublin campus AV screens as well as the TU Dublin Sport Instagram.  During the programme  Participants were emailed weekly with a motivational message as well as the nutritional factsheets and workout plans, which were also shared to the TU Dublin sport Instagram page. A ‘Healthy Eating’ presentation that expanded on the factsheets was provided by Healthy Campus Interns to students and staff across all TU Dublin campuses. Attendees were given copies of the food pyramid and other HSE leaflets on physical activity and nutrition.  Celebratory 5K Fun Run  To organise the celebratory 5K Fun Run, a meeting was held with TU Dublin Sport to organise a date, time and staff provision for the fun run. Promotion was created that included the Fun Run details and QR code to register. A risk assessment was submitted to Health & Safety at TU Dublin for approval prior to the event. The Healthy Campus stand provided free fruit, HSE educational materials and sustainable goody bags. A DJ from the DJ Society played music to boost the event atmosphere. Spot prizes included TU Dublin merchandise, a 50 euro one for all voucher, and 3 free TU Dublin gym memberships. |
| **What resources did you need?** | HSE leaflets on the food pyramid, healthy eating, and physical activity were provided to all participants. TU Dublin Sport staff facilitated the weekly in-person sessions as well as the fun run warm-up and run. Free fruit was arranged using the Healthy Campus budget. Goody bags included HSE leaflets on nutrition and PA, sustainable water bottles supplied by TU Dublin Sustainability and sustainable bike lights supplied by TFI. |
| **Has it been evaluated? How successful has it been?** | The 5 Week Couch to 5K programme had 48 signups and the Fun Run had 53 signups. The ‘Healthy Eating’ presentations had poor uptake as this was only advertised to Couch to 5K participants via email. Next time it should be advertised to the wider university community. |
| **Any future plans, including the sustainability of the initiative?** | The next Couch to 5K programme will build on the existing programme and avoid any mistakes to maximize success, such as greater lead in time and promotion. |
| **Key Learning Points** | It was found that social media was the most successful method of sharing information to students in particular, instead of TU Dublin update emails as many go unnoticed. |

**Healthy Campus Framework Categories (please tick all that apply)**

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| **Healthy Campus Process** | **Whole Campus Approach** | **Topic** | **Population Group** |
| Commit | Leadership, Strategy & Governance | Alcohol | Students |
| Coordinate | Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) | Substance Misuse | Staff |
| Consult | Campus Culture & Communications | Healthy Eating / Food | Wider community |
| Create | Personal & Professional Development | Mental Health & Wellbeing | Other |
| Celebrate & Continue |  | Sexual Health & Wellbeing |  |
|  |  | Tobacco Free Campus |  |
|  |  | Physical Activity / Active Transport |  |
|  |  | Wellbeing on the Curriculum (can also fall under ‘Personal & Professional Development) |  |
|  |  | Health & Sustainability |  |
|  |  | Other |  |

**Contact Details**

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