

Performance Agreement 2024–2028 between the HEA and Technological University Dublin

Preamble

This performance agreement is established between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Technological University Dublin in accordance with the System Performance Framework 2023–28. The Agreement identifies Technological University Dublin’s performance objectives and the associated implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting processes.

This performance agreement will be used by the HEA to measure and assess the strategic performance of the institution via an annual cycle of reporting against the agreement and Strategy and Performance Dialogue. Technological University Dublin should notify the HEA in writing of any proposed modifications to the Performance Agreement with a supporting rationale when submitting the annual report. Any agreed amendments to the Performance Agreement will be recorded by the HEA with the supporting rationale. This information may inform future monitoring and review processes and inform HEA reporting at a system level.

The HEA and Technological University Dublin acknowledge that policy underlying some or all of this performance agreement is subject to review from time to time by the HEA or Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. The HEA and Technological University Dublin agree that if changes need to be made to the Performance Agreement because of such a review, the HEA will notify the institution in writing.

This performance agreement will be published on the HEA website in line with the HEA mandate to measure and assess institutions’ strategic performance with a view to strengthening the performance of the higher education and research system and of Higher Education Institutions, and to ensure institutions’ accountability. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the information presented in the Performance Agreement (including qualitative and quantitative data) is accurate.

The term of this performance agreement is from September 2024 to August 2028 unless terminated earlier by agreement.

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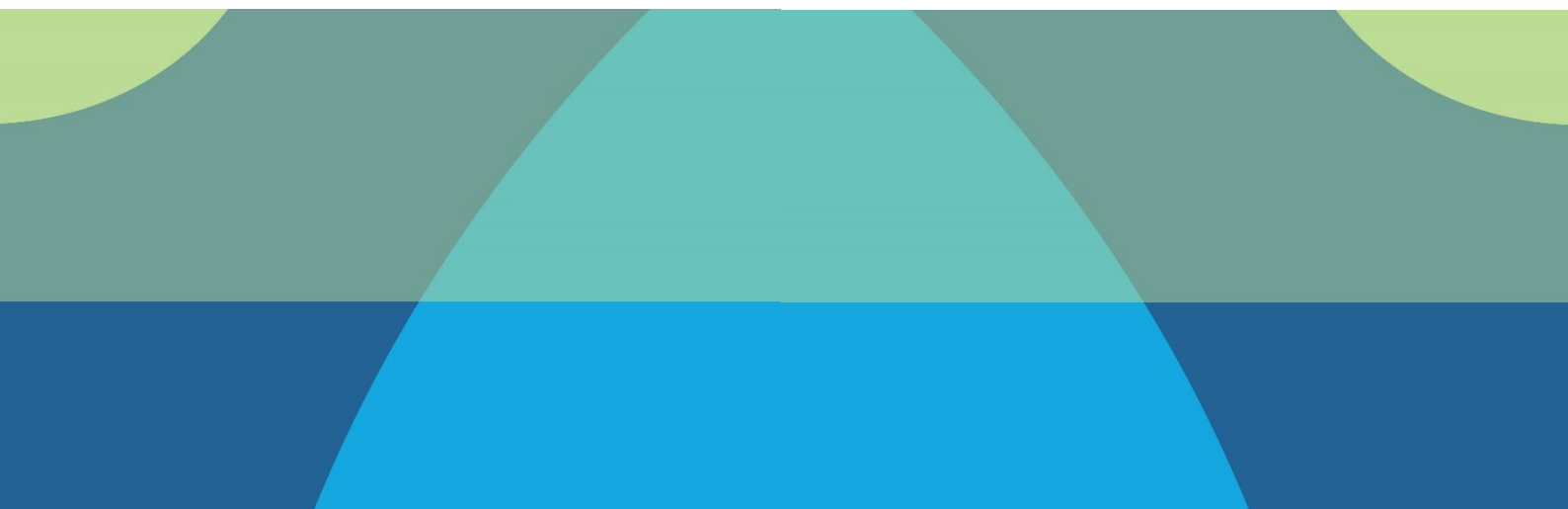
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Performance Agreement 2024–2028

Section 1: Context

Overview of the institution and its context

[TU Dublin](#) is Ireland's first technological university, established in January 2019. Its mission is the pursuit of:

- Excellence in student-centred learning
- Practice-led impact-focused research and deep discipline engagement, and
- Co-creation of teaching, learning and research

Deeply embedded in the region, the University has campuses in Dublin city centre (at Grangegorman, Aungier Street, and Bolton Street), and in Blanchardstown and Tallaght. A leader in STEAM disciplines, the University supports the largest cohort of students in engineering, built environment, ICT, business, media, culinary arts, and the creative and performing arts, as well as students in sciences and health. We are passionate about lifelong learning and as the largest provider of part-time education, we make an important contribution to the economic life of Ireland, enabling capacity building for the future. The five Faculties of Arts & Humanities; Business; Computing, Digital & Data; Engineering & Built Environment; and Sciences & Health, are building on a legacy of diversity in apprenticeship, undergraduate and postgraduate provision and support — about 28,000 students and 8,000 graduates annually.

Our researchers and innovators are pioneers in science and technology discovery, play active roles in informing policy and standards, and contribute to the creative life of Ireland. They also engage in technology transfer and business start-up activity that contributes to the regional and national economies.

With an international outlook, we welcome students and staff from around the world. Our strong international partnerships provide plenty of opportunities for student and staff exchange programmes, major cross-collaboration research projects, and employment opportunities. We are a founding partner in the European University of Technology ([EUt+](#)). We are immensely proud of our global network of over 100,000 graduates.

A breakdown of student and staff data is provided in the following tables. Some key facts and figures about TU Dublin can be seen in the infographic on the next page.

NFQ Level	Programme Type	Full-time	Part-time	Total
6	Craft Apprenticeship		1,676	1,676
6	Higher Cert & Certificate	558	1,263	1,821
	Other	115	306	421
7	Ordinary Degree & Cert.	2,937	997	3,934
	Other		217	217
8	Honours degree & Cert.	13,455	1,100	14,555
	Other	84	422	506
9	PG Cert. & Diploma	25	577	602
	Masters Taught	609	847	1456
	Masters Research	42	34	76
	Other		445	445
10	PhD	413	173	586
	Other		26	26
Total		18,238	8,083	26,321

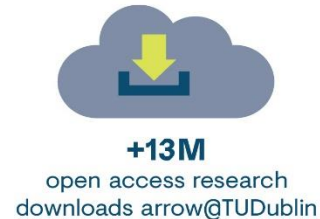
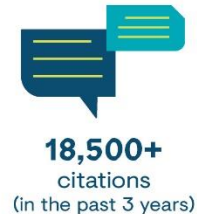
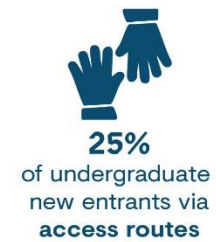
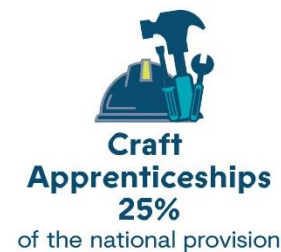
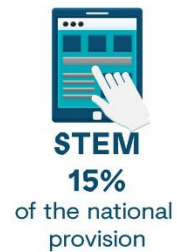
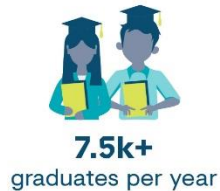
 Table 1: TU Dublin Student Numbers (2023/24)¹

Staff Category	Staff Numbers (FTE)
Academic	1,511
General Operatives	137
Management, Clerical Administration and Library	758
Student Services	54
Technicians	166
Total	2,626

 Table 2: TU Dublin Staff Numbers (2023)²

¹ Data taken from March 2024, HEA SRS Return (Headcount): Excludes Overseas, Incoming Exchange, and Junior Music students

² All numbers are FTEs, from Q4 2023, ECF staff return to the HEA.



Field of Study

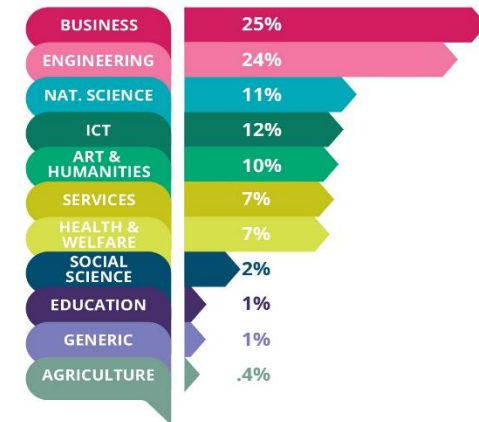


Figure 1: TU Dublin Key Facts & Figures 2022/23

The University launched its [Strategic Intent 2030](#) in January 2020. This set out a ten-year roadmap and a vision to ‘Create a Better World, Together’. Based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, the strategy comprises three key pillars of **People, Planet** and **Partnership**.

In September 2023, TU Dublin launched its [Strategic Plan 2024–2028](#) — the second phase within the Strategic Intent. This continues to focus on the three pillars and sets out the overall goals and targets for the coming five years. The development of the plan involved detailed internal analysis and external environmental review. Again, consultation with all major stakeholders was conducted in developing the ambitions, direction and goals for the Strategic Plan. The focus areas for 2024–2028 are provided in the image below.

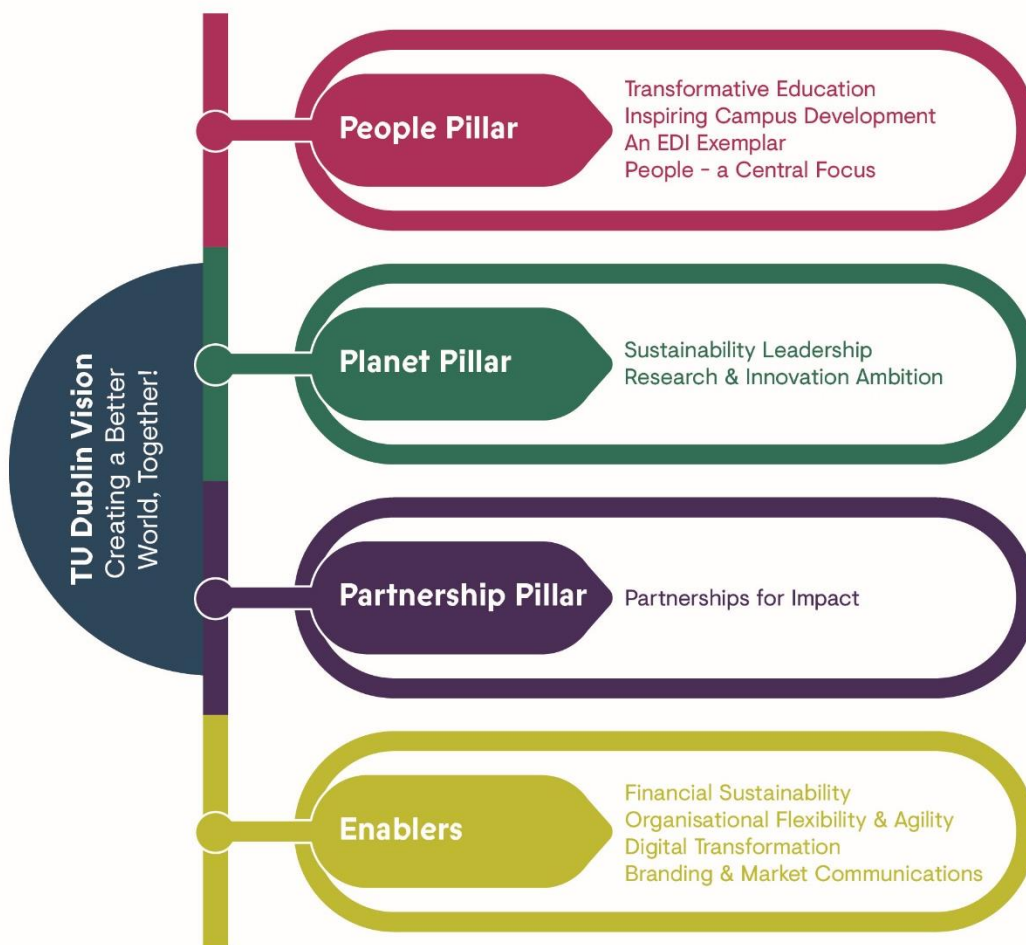


Figure 2: Focus Areas for Strategic Plan 2024–2028

Approach to the development of the Performance Agreement

The TU Dublin [Strategic Plan 2024–2028](#) was launched at the end of September 2023 at the same time as the System Performance Framework 2023–2028. Because of this close timing, the preparatory work conducted for the development of the Strategic Plan and agreement on the key goals and targets aligned with the development of our Performance Agreement.

TU Dublin’s University Executive Team (UET), led by the President, championed the development of the new Strategic Plan. This was supported by the Strategy & Planning Team, through an iterative process of evaluation, review and development. Dedicated workshop sessions took place to review drafts and agree final goals and targets. Engagement and feedback from stakeholders provided input to the process.³ The Governing Body had a number of strategic planning workshops and meetings during the process to review and provide input into the development of the Strategic Plan and its objectives, before final consideration and sign-off.

Climate, Environment & Sustainability and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) are strategic areas of focus for the University. The objectives for these areas flow through all aspects of our work and are embedded in all executive decision-making. Therefore, we include two objectives in our Performance Agreement, to give prominence to the work and the ambition of the University in these areas. As testament to these commitments, TU Dublin has published its [Equality Statement](#) and [Sustainability Statement](#), reflecting the University’s values of Impact, Excellence, Inclusion, and Respect.

Structures in place for evaluation

The Strategic Plan and the Performance Agreement are aligned; therefore, we will use the same approach and structures to evaluate and report on the Performance Agreement as we use for the Strategic Plan. In our Strategic Plan Implementation Framework, the overall implementation, monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress is the responsibility of the University Executive Team (UET), under the direction of the President.

Sponsors (usually a member of the UET, responsible for the particular area) and Leads (usually Heads of the relevant function) have been assigned for each of the major goals and KPIs within the Strategic Plan, and there are action plans for each KPI. The Sponsor acts as the authority / key decision-maker for the specific KPI — ensuring a measurable action plan is in place, that there is continued review of performance, that items of concern are brought to the attention of UET, and where necessary, corrective actions are proposed, approved and implemented. The Lead, working closely with

³ Consultation with stakeholders in the development of the Strategic Plan is determined by legislation — Section 18 of TU Act 2018, amended under the HEA Act 2022. For the 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, stakeholders consulted included: The Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; the HEA; TU Dublin students and staff; TU Dublin social partners; TU Dublin Academic Council; Dublin region Education & Training Boards; Dublin region local authorities; industry partners and industry support agencies (EI and IDA).

Faculties, Schools and Professional Service functions, drives execution of the relevant Plan for the KPIs, and monitors and reports on actual performance against the Plan. The Lead maintains the risk register associated with the KPI and risks are managed according to the TU Dublin risk management system.

Where appropriate, progress reports are provided to relevant sub-committees, but at least twice-yearly reporting to the UET on all KPIs takes place, with detailed reporting on individual KPIs scheduled for at least once per year. Similarly, reporting to Governing Body on progress is at least twice-yearly for all KPIs, with detailed reporting on individual KPIs scheduled for at least once per year. Coordination of reporting is done by the Strategy & Planning Team, in collaboration with the Sponsors and Leads. Communication of progress on the Strategic Plan is provided to the wider TU Dublin community through the ‘UET communication briefings’ process and through update reports on the staff intranet.

Data collection is from the TU Dublin main management information systems and, for benchmarking purposes, use is made of the HEA’s statistics databases, as well as other national sources, as appropriate. There are some challenges in accessing some of the data in a quick and easy manner and ensuring data accuracy; this is mainly due to the current systems integration phase in which TU Dublin finds itself. It is expected that over the next two years, the University’s digital systems will be fully integrated and streamlined. Plans are also in place to develop an appropriate data reporting system that will facilitate greater ease and robustness for monitoring and reporting on strategic goals and targets. A proposal for this project was approved under the Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF).

Section 2: Performance Objectives

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%.

Pillar: Teaching & Learning

Transversals: Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; International.

Rationale for Performance Objective 1

Within the Strategic Plan 2024–2028, TU Dublin has prioritised growing student enrolments as a key objective. Under the Focus Area ‘Transformative Education’, TU Dublin has set a goal of attracting new and diverse students, with a target of growing total student enrolments by 12%. This will support national objectives for higher education, ensuring that the University is flexible and responsive in meeting skills shortages as they emerge, while fostering greater participation in lifelong learning and the goals of the National Access Plan 2022–28.

In 2022/23 a total of 256,785 students were enrolled in higher education. TU Dublin accounted for almost 10% of national enrolments. With over 7,500 graduates, it is one of the largest universities in Ireland.⁴ The University is located in the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) region, which is a major economic hub, accounting for approximately 50% of total employment in the country, across diverse industries. It is estimated that EMRA will grow by 17% to 2.7 million people by 2031, providing a strong pipeline of potential learners entering HE.⁵ The future growth in TU Dublin student enrolments will be shaped by (i) the University’s location within the EMRA, (ii) the development of our programme offering, and (iii) our plan to increase our non-EU student enrolments.

TU Dublin is the largest provider of Business education and STEM education in Ireland, with 6,320 and 11,760 students respectively. Significant growth opportunities exist in these fields of study linked to continued economic growth and the twin transition of climate change and digitalisation.⁶

The drop in national part-time enrolments since 2020/21 has been 9.5% in total and 16% at undergraduate level. Whilst the postgraduate enrolments dropped slightly (2%) in the last couple of years, it had been growing steadily - there is still obviously some demand for upskilling and reskilling

⁴ [HEA Statistics](#)

⁵ [Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019–2031 \(Eastern & Midlands\)](#)

⁶ The [National Skills Bulletin \(2023\)](#) notes that 50,000 new entrants will be required in construction during the period 2023–2030 in order to deliver on the Government housing and retrofitting plans alone. The increase in digitalisation and automation in this and in other sectors of the economy, requires significant upskilling and reskilling.

at this level, albeit with financial support from the students' employers perhaps restricted in recent times. TU Dublin has traditionally been one of the largest providers of part-time education in Ireland - In 2022/23, it had over 6,000 enrolments (excluding apprenticeships), accounting for 11% of the national provision - around 2/3 of these were at undergraduate level. Whilst this is a very dynamic space currently, TU Dublin intends to continue to provide appropriate part-time offerings.

In respect of craft apprenticeship education, the planned development of our programme offering and growth in student numbers will require recapitalisation and repurposing of existing University space. The University's capacity is restricted in terms of physical space, but it is working to address that and to grow apprenticeship student numbers in areas of high demand. Growth is predicated on the conversion of existing spaces or provision of space via new build, acquisition or lease. All of these will require funding through EOI calls from the HEA. In addition, approval for additional equipment; appropriate resourcing; and better allocation of non-pay funding to cover increasing operational costs will be required.

The University will seek to expand student enrolments, in the large craft programmes of Plumbing, Electrical, and Carpentry and Joinery. This expansion will be accommodated through additional plumbing workshops on the Blanchardstown campus; use of the new Public Private Partnership (PPP) building on the Tallaght campus for electrical apprentices, with additional space to be acquired as necessary for expansion; and reconfiguration of space on the city campus to house Carpentry and Joinery. While we wish to provide additional capacity in aviation and transport technologies, solutions in the short-term are very limited. Our preferred longer-term solution would be for consolidation of aviation and transport provision in permanent and University-owned facilities on campus through new build or acquisition.

To respond to student enrolment challenges, TU Dublin is reviewing and updating its programme portfolio to ensure that it is optimal in terms of potential market demand. We are developing new and existing programmes and leveraging our relationships with industry to provide a unique offering in the Dublin region, focused on applied learning and flexible delivery. Our plan is to develop and expand our provision in apprenticeship education and lifelong learning (through [Skillnet](#), [Springboard](#) and micro-credentials); and to increase flexibility and choice in our full-time programmes, including through the provision of common-entry programmes and flexible pathways. We will continue to update our programme portfolio to meet new skills challenges, in critical areas such as AI, sustainability, and fintech. The fluctuating part-time market presents a particular dilemma – the University does not intend to target major growth in part-time enrolments in the coming years, rather, following an in-depth review it is seeking to re-align its provision to address emerging market needs and opportunities.

TU Dublin will also focus on growing its intake of non-EU fee-paying students as a significant strand of the student enrolment strategy. In 2022/23 there were almost 24,000 non-EU students in Irish HEIs, of which TU Dublin accounted for 3.5%. The HEA International Students Report (2022) notes that more than half (56%) of international students choose to study in Dublin-based institutes. Almost one third of non-EU students were studying STEM subjects and a further 23% studying Business subjects in the Dublin region universities. This provides TU Dublin with an opportunity for growth, given our expertise in these fields of study. Additionally, the interest in Arts & Humanities shown from American students

provides further opportunities for our strong offerings in that domain. China, India and the US will be a key focus for TU Dublin, given that they account for 39% of all international enrolments in Irish HE. In addition to development of our global partnerships and a dedicated offering for our international students, the University will increase investment in branding and marketing communications to establish the TU Dublin brand in Ireland and abroad.

A key element of our strategy is to improve progression rates, specifically in the large cohort of full-time undergraduates. TU Dublin faces particular challenges due to the diversity of our offering (level 6 and 7 programmes have higher rates of non-progression) and the diversity of our student base (with those from socio-economic disadvantage statistically likely to fare worse in terms of progression – rates of 23% non-progression versus 12% among affluent students).⁷ The University has set a target that for all programmes, the minimum progression rates for new entrants will be at the national norm. A dedicated task group has been established to help address this.⁸ It will focus on implementing a combination of strategies to encourage student retention, including through continuous improvement of the curriculum and student supports. We will address the diverse and evolving needs of students holistically, ensuring that academic, social, financial and personal aspects are all considered and supported.

To ensure that we prioritise student success, we will review outcomes from student surveys to capture the experience of our students and monitor it over time. Whilst the national survey (ISSE) is paused, we will use our own internal student survey to assess if our students would recommend TU Dublin to others. A new question has been added to the survey in 2023/24 and this forms the baseline for future targets.

Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 1

Management and reporting will be as set out previously, in Section 1. The Sponsor for Performance Object 1 is the Registrar & Deputy President; the Lead is the Head of Recruitment, Admissions & Participation.

To support **delivery**, a range of actions are being taken:

- An Enrolment Planning Working Group has been charged with developing specific targets and a detailed action plan to meet the overall enrolment targets for the University. The targets are aligned to our education strategy and the development of the University’s programme portfolio.
- The University has put in place a very strong Recruitment, Admissions & Participation (RAP) Team. The Team works closely with colleagues in academic units and external partners to support recruitment of students and ensure relevance of our academic offerings. The RAP

⁷ [HEA Report on Non-Progression - 2016/17 to 2021/22](#)

⁸ Retention and progression targets are established and monitored in our Strategic Plan. Also, in this Performance Agreement, under PO4, Access and Participation, we have established targets for progression for students with disabilities and students who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Team continues to foster close relationships with schools and FET colleges, and employers and community partners; it also manages recruitment for Springboard programmes, continuing education and taught postgraduate course offerings.

- A comprehensive advertising and [brand awareness campaign](#) is underway that underpins the marketing and recruitment effort.
- A review of the University's full programme portfolio is in progress, to ensure that the TU Dublin offering is appropriate for today's needs. Through an agreed process of analysis and engagement, we will continue to review our programme portfolio, create new programmes and optimise programme delivery for student growth.
- A range of 'HyFlex' teaching and learning spaces are being developed to enable different modes of participation for the student, including in-person attendance, synchronous online participation, and asynchronous online engagement. The key principle is student choice and flexibility, aiming to accommodate diverse learning styles, geographical locations, personal commitments, and other factors that may impact students' ability to attend classes in person, whilst continuing to provide support and guidance of educators and peers. Through N-TUTORR funding, TU Dublin plans to have 21 new lecture halls/rooms in place across its campuses within the next two years.

Evaluating Progress: Analysis from the Student Record & Management System (SRMS) and annual SRS returns will be used to monitor student enrolment and retention and progression data. There are some challenges currently, as the University has three separate SRMSs. Interim processes have been developed to collate and monitor the data pending the introduction of the new single SRMS system in 2025. The new system will include a dedicated CRM to better manage the student lifecycle from enquiry to application. We will use the TU Dublin Annual Student Survey to monitor the student experience. Monitoring of progress will be conducted by the Sponsor and Lead (as per process set out in Section 1).

Risk management: In terms of risks, there is significant competition in the market, particularly in the Dublin region. The TU Dublin brand is not yet well established in the market. Investment in our brand is a key focus of our plan to support student recruitment. There is also volatility in the part-time market, in which TU Dublin is traditionally strong, and we need to adjust to new market demands. The University will conduct detailed market research to ensure that our product offering is appropriate for this new, dynamic market. A dedicated sales and marketing budget for international student recruitment has also been agreed. Through its risk management process, the University has put in place additional monitoring of student enrolments throughout the academic year – from applications through to initial registrations (Nov.) and to final registration data (March) – assessing areas that may need additional action.

Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 1

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
1.1	Full-time undergraduate student enrolments as a proportion of total taught enrolments (FTE)	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2023/24: 16,722 (FTE) 74.3% of total taught enrolments (22,496 FTE)	Maintain share of national FTUG enrolments at 10% based on headcount (17,522 in 2022/23) as per HEA Statistics	16,997 74.6% of 22,781	17,330 74.3% of 23,321	17,844 73.7% of 24,206	18,561 73.9% of 25,199	11% growth (+1,839 FTE) 0.4 p.p. decrease on baseline
1.2	Full-time postgraduate taught student enrolments as a proportion of total taught enrolments (FTE)	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2023/24: 600 (FTE) 2.7% of total taught enrolments (22,496 FTE)	Maintain share of national FT PGT enrolments at 3% based on headcount (626 in 2022/23)	695 3.1% of 22,781	753 3.2% of 23,321	811 3.3% of 24,206	868 3.4% of 25,199	45% growth (+268 FTE) 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	Quantitative	2023/24: 4,335 (FTE) 19.3% of total taught enrolments (22,496 FTE)	Maintain share of national PT UG & PG Taught enrolments (excluding craft apprenticeship) based on headcount (11% in 2022/23)	4,261 18.7% of 22,781	4,340 18.6% of 23,321	4,400 18.2% of 24,206	4,468 17.8% of 25,199	3.1% growth (+133 FTE) 1.5 p.p. decrease on baseline

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
1.4	Craft apprenticeship enrolments as a proportion (%) of total taught student enrolments (FTE)	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2023/24: 838 (FTE) 3.7% of 22,496 FTE	Maintain share of national craft apprenticeships (20% in 2021/22)	833 3.7% of 22,781	898 3.9% of 23,321	1,150 4.8% of 24,206	1,222 4.9% of 25,199	45.8% growth (+384 FTE) 1.2 p.p. increase on baseline
1.5	Non-EU fee paying students (undergraduate & postgraduate) as a proportion (%) of total full-time taught student enrolments (FTE)	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2023/24: 596 (FTE) 2.6% of total taught enrolments (22,496 FTE)	Maintain share of national Non-EU fee-paying students, 3.5% based on headcount (823 in 2022/23)	802 3.5% of 22,781	1,042 4.5% of 23,321	1,231 5.1% of 24,206	1,421 5.7% of 25,199	138.4% growth (+825 students) 3.1 p.p. increase on baseline
1.6	Non-progression rate (%) by NFQ level	HEA SRS and HEA Non-progression Dashboard	Quantitative	2021/22: L6 = 21% L7 = 35% L8 = 21%	Achieve rates in line with National Average. In 2021/22: L6 = 25% L7 = 31% L8 = 14%	L6: 21% L7: 35% L8: 21%	L6: 21% L7: 35% L8: 20%	L6: 20% L7: 33% L8: 18%	L6: 20% L7: 31% L8: 16%	L6: +1p.p. progression L7: +4p.p. progression L8: +5p.p. progression
1.7	Student Satisfaction rate as determined by survey question "Would you recommend your programme to another person?"	TU Dublin Annual Student Survey	Quantitative	2023/24: 83%	Comparable questions in ISSE Survey (when relaunched)	83.5%	84.0%	84.5%	85.0%	Increase of 2 p.p. in satisfaction measure

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.

Pillar: Teaching & Learning

Transversals: Climate & Sustainable Development; Society; Institutional Leadership & Culture.

Rationale for Performance Objective 2

Sustainability underpins TU Dublin’s [Strategic Intent 2030](#) by aligning with the objectives and time horizon of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030, also known as the Global Agenda. This necessitates embedding sustainability into our activities through a whole-of-institution approach. In the Strategic Intent 2030, we commit to ‘Creating responsible global citizens’ who are described as ‘A new generation of TU Dublin graduates leading the sustainability agenda with passion and purpose’.

In the TU Dublin [Strategic Plan 2024–2028](#), our target is that all staff and students will have engaged in sustainability education and training by 2028, and a University rating from the Association for the Enhancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s (AASHE) [Sustainability Tracking and Assessment Rating System \(STARS\)](#) will be achieved by 2027. [STARS](#) is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. It is a worldwide benchmarking tool and about 600 institutions have earned a STARS rating.

The rationale for this objective is provided in key documents, including:

- Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development — ESD to 2030 (Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), 2022)
- National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022–2024 (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), 2022)
- Climate Action Plan 2023 (DECC, 2023)
- Public Sector Climate Action Mandate and Strategy (DECC, 2023)

As part of the transformation to a single university, TU Dublin developed a single integrated Programme & Module Catalogue (PMC). Of the approved University modules in 2024, 5.5% were sustainability focused. Universities that received gold and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 5% to 20% in this measure. Given our ambition to be a beacon of sustainability, we aim to improve on

this metric. Our target is that by 2028, 15% of approved modules will be sustainability focused. Our Sustainability Education Framework (SEF) was developed in 2023 to provide the overarching support for a whole-of-institution approach to embedding sustainability at TU Dublin.

It is important that there is a critical mass of TU Dublin staff that engage in sustainability education, development and/or training, to ensure embedding of sustainability more generally across the University. As a comparator, 38%-75% of staff at universities that received STARS awards engage in sustainability education and training. TU Dublin's current level (based on participation in a number of specific programmes) is currently just 4%. The University has targeted to grow engagement in sustainability education substantially.

Similarly, the engagement of students in the sustainability agenda is critical, if we are to deliver our ambitions for change and impact from our alumni. As a first step, participation in the Sulitest sustainability literacy test is a focus, and we will seek to grow the percentage of students who complete the Sulitest over the period of the plan.

Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 2

Within TU Dublin, the Head of Sustainability Education will work closely with sustainability education Leads and staff in Faculties and Schools, to support, develop and embed sustainability education across all disciplines over the period of the Performance Agreement, 2024–2028. The Head of Sustainability Intelligence will support monitoring of education for sustainability in the curriculum, using sustainability assessment tools based on the AASHE-STARs criteria. All Faculties and Schools will continually seek improvement toward sustainability.

Management and reporting on this performance objective will be as set out in Section 1. The Sponsor for Performance Objective 2 is the Vice President for Sustainability; the Lead is the Head of Sustainability Education.

To ensure **delivery**, a programme of work will be implemented, so that:

- All Faculties identify relevant SDGs and key areas for sustainability impact, supported by the Sustainability Education (SE) unit.
- All Faculties identify key existing resources (people, partnerships, projects/initiatives, other exemplars) to deliver on sustainability education objectives.
- All staff engage with sustainability training and education to support climate leadership and to deliver on the [TU Dublin Climate Action Roadmap](#).
- Academic programme review processes require evidence of sustainability in programme and module learning outcomes.
- All incoming students undertake Sustainability Literacy testing (Sulitest) in mandatory orientation and extended induction.

- A system is put in place to monitor, track and report on sustainability metrics.
- An engagement and communications campaign is undertaken that promotes and supports students and staff.

Resource Provision: TU Dublin has put in place a dedicated Sustainability Team to champion the University’s aim of establishing TU Dublin as one of the world’s most sustainable universities. The Team comprises the functional areas of Sustainability Education, Campus Decarbonisation, Sustainability Intelligence and Societal Engagement. The Head of Sustainability Education will lead on this KPI (Performance Objective 2) but will draw on other areas as required. In addition, there are Sustainability Champions in the Faculties and Schools, supporting the work at local level. The University also has the opportunity to draw from initiatives being conducted under the TU Dublin SATLE project, the N-TUTORR national project, and the HCI-funded Building Change (Resilient Design Curriculum) initiative.

Evaluating Progress: The STARS reporting process (to be used by TU Dublin) enables institutions to create a baseline for continuous improvement. As noted above, baseline data has been used to set our annual targets. Targets may be revised in 2025, when our new integrated SRMS system is introduced and will connect with the PMC to facilitate monitoring of **active and in-use modules**.

In monitoring progress on the number of staff engaging in sustainability education, we will use figures from our ECF staff return to the HEA (2,626 FTE at Q4 2023). We expect this number to remain relatively constant over the period but will adjust accordingly. Processes for tracking staff engaging in sustainability education are being worked through and require integrating information across a number of areas and teams, including: [Learning, Teaching & Assessment \(LTA\)](#), [Sustainability Education](#); [People Development](#); [European University of Technology \(EUT+\)](#) initiatives; and [N-TUTORR](#). Our Learning Management System also needs to capture sustainability education that is provided/undertaken independently, by Academic Faculties and Professional Services.

Monitoring of progress on students completing the Sulitest will be conducted by the Sponsor and Lead (as per process set out in Section 1).

Risk Management: In terms of overall risks in the Climate & Sustainability area, it is recognised that many of the actions in our [TU Dublin Climate Action Roadmap](#) will require significant investment. The Vice President for Sustainability continues to monitor the opportunities and risk in this space. In respect of this specific performance objective, which focuses on Education for Sustainability, the key risks relate to (a) achieving strong engagement of staff and students and (b) restrictions on the capacity to evaluate and monitor sustainability progress due to deficits in the tracking systems. As we develop and integrate our IT systems, evaluating and monitoring of progress will become more streamlined. The Lead will continue to monitor these risks, continuing to roll out advocacy campaigns to engage the TU Dublin community and linking with the Head of Sustainability Intelligence on the tracking progress, as necessary.

Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 2

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
2.1	Percentage (%) of modules that are defined as sustainability-focused or sustainability inclusive	TU Dublin Programme & Module Catalogue ⁹	Quantitative	5.5% (402/7314 modules) Jan 2024	Universities that received gold and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 5%-20%	7% (512/7,314) ¹⁰	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	Quantitative	25% (6 out of 24 Schools)	Universities that received gold and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 50–90%	29% (7)	42% (10)	58% (14)	75% (18)	50 p.p. increase on baseline
2.3	Percentage (%) (cumulative) of academic and non-academic staff engaging in sustainability education, professional development and/or training	Staff Training & Development	Quantitative	4% (105/2,626) ¹¹	Universities that received gold and platinum STARS awards typically vary from 38%-75%	5% (131/2,626)	25% (656/2,626)	50% (1,313/2,626)	75% (1,965/2,626)	71 p.p. increase on baseline (+1,860)

⁹ When our integrated SRMS is introduced in 2025, this will link with the PMC and allow us to track active modules (rather than approved) to facilitate greater accuracy. Our targets will still apply but the number of modules will change.

¹⁰ To facilitate measurement, we will use the same 7,314 approved modules and monitor changes in the dataset over the 4-year period.

¹¹ 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).

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
2.4	Percentage (%) of students who complete the Sulitest	Sulitest Platform	Quantitative	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	5% (1,155/23,109)	10% (2367/23,674)	15% (3711/24,741)	20% (5,135/25,675)	16 p.p. increase on baseline (+4,173)

Performance Objective 3

To grow research activity by 2028 so that 23% (25%)¹² of our academic staff are research active and that postgraduate research student enrolments represent 4.5% (6.5%) of L8-L10 enrolments.

Pillar: Research & Innovation

Transversals: Climate & Sustainable Development; Enterprise; Region.

Rationale for Performance Objective 3

Research and Innovation (R&I) are central to TU Dublin’s vision, as Ireland’s first technological university. We support “a body of research that includes research relevant at regional, national and international levels”.¹³ As outlined in our [Strategic Intent 2030](#), we are focused on the “creation of new knowledge and the development of timely and practical solutions that address the SDGs.”

Within the [Strategic Plan 2024–2028](#), our R&I ambition is prioritised as a key focus area for the period. We aim to increase the number of staff holding doctorates, expand the proportion of staff that are research active, increase the value of research funding, and grow the number of postgraduate research students. These goals are interlinked, as illustrated below, and are a requirement in legislation. In line with the eligibility criteria for applications under the [TU Act 2018](#), TU Dublin is to increase, within 10 years of the date of application, the proportion of research students at L9 and 10 and the % staff holding doctorates.

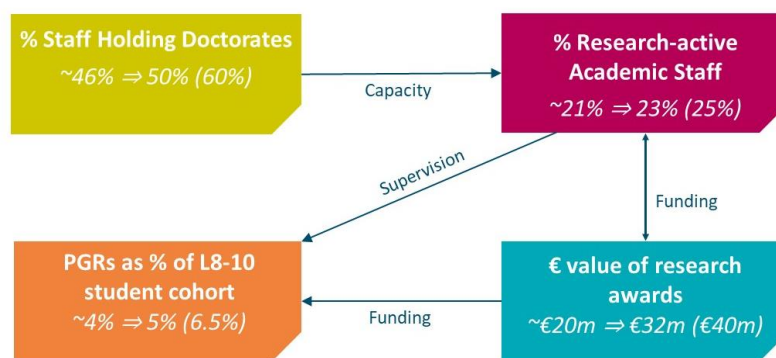


Figure 3: KPIs identified in TU Dublin Strategic Plan 2024–2028 for Research Growth

In our Performance Agreement, TU Dublin will focus on two critical measures of success: (i) growth in research-active staff and (ii) growth in the number of research postgraduates. Progress on these two

¹² * 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

¹³ [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)

metrics is intertwined with the other two indicators in our Strategic Plan — growth in research awards and staff with doctorates.

TU Dublin’s focus on research-active staff and the development of research graduates aligns directly with the ambitions of [Impact 2030: Ireland’s Research and Innovation Strategy](#), which prioritises “the nurturing and development of talent and excellence to build on Ireland’s reputation as an Island of Talent and a location for research excellence and impact. We recognise that the quality of our researchers is fundamental to the quality of our research system, its collaboration with partners in industry and policymakers, both in Ireland and abroad”.¹⁴

Our [Research & Innovation Strategy 2023–2028](#) provides the roadmap for how we will contribute to the national effort to build an Island of R&I talent and grow our areas of impact. The University will prioritise research activities under the following themes:

- Health and Wellbeing for a Thriving Society
- Transformative Digital Solutions
- Sustainable Food Systems and Environmental Protection
- Materials and Technologies for Sustainable Transformation
- Culture, Innovation and Inclusivity

In this way, the University will continue building its capacity and support the development of sectoral strengths and emerging opportunities in the region, as identified in the [National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation, 2022–2027](#).

As of December 2022, TU Dublin recorded 21% of academic staff as ‘research active’ (using data from the Q4 2022 HEA Staff Return and the TU Dublin internal research information system). A review of other Irish HEIs is taken from the [HEA Institutional Profiles](#), 2017/18 to 2019/20. For benchmarking purposes, two groups are considered - the other Dublin region universities (DCU, MU, TCD and UCD) and the other Technological Universities (ATU, MTU, SETU and TUS). Relevant metrics are: (a) bibliometrics for a cumulative 5 years per HEI; (b) the total contract research income per academic staff; and (c) the number of doctorate graduates per 10 academic staff. Unfortunately, bibliometric data is not available for the TUs in this dataset.

In terms of postgraduate research students (absolute numbers), TU Dublin ranks fourth among HEIs in the Dublin region and is highest among the TUs.¹⁵

¹⁴ From introduction in Impact 2030, page 2.

¹⁵ <https://hea.ie/statistics/data-for-download-and-visualisations/key-facts-figures/>

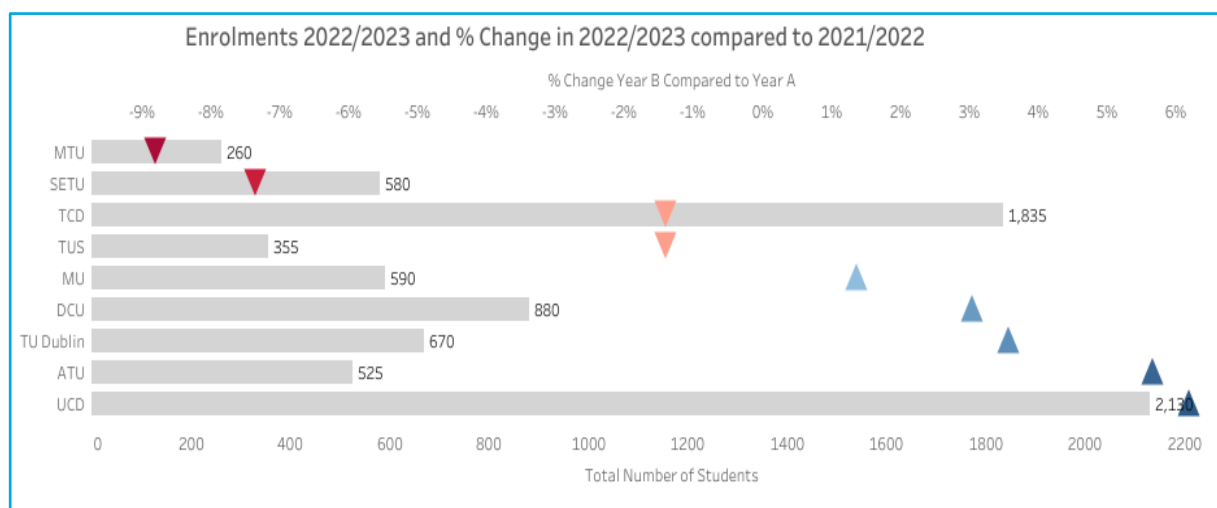


Figure 4: Postgraduate research student enrolments 2022/2023 (Derived from HEA Dashboard)

The TU Act 2018 measures the ratio of Postgraduate Research (L9 and 10) enrolments as a percentage of total enrolments at L8–L10. TU Dublin will focus on growing Postgraduate Research (PGR) enrolments to at least 4.5% in the period to 2028, having maintained the level at around 4% annually, since designation. A stretch target of 6.5% will apply, should the recommendations on career structures and workload model, as mentioned earlier, be advanced. We have developed a comprehensive range of [Research Supports](#) to assist our students as they progress through their learning journey and transition to employment/further research. We have also developed a [Researcher Career Development Framework](#) that will contribute to more ground-breaking research contributions, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and focusing on cutting-edge research.

As the University grows its PGR cohort, it will continue to monitor student success in terms of completion rates. In 2018 the European University Association Council for Doctoral Education (EUA CDE) carried out a major survey of doctoral education in Europe and provided an overview of developments.¹⁶ The data reported provides an opportunity to benchmark against peer institutions in Europe. Two measures will be used to monitor success – (1) time to completion and (2) completion rates within 6 years. In terms of the former, the average time to completion amongst the surveyed universities was between 3.5 and 4.5 years. The survey also showed that the majority of doctoral candidates (66%) complete their doctoral dissertation within six years. TU Dublin seeks to improve on both these measures within the period of the plan.

Among the TUs, TU Dublin and SETU have the highest number of doctoral graduates; however, research income is low. To meet our targets, TU Dublin needs to increase its research income substantially in the years ahead. This will depend on research-active staff having the experience and bandwidth to prepare successful funding applications and engage effectively in delivering on the research award itself, disseminating results and transferring the knowledge appropriately to have real impact. Research income levels have been growing for TU Dublin since 2019 ([TU Dublin Annual Report 2021](#), p.36), but there is still significant work to be done. Restrictions due to the current academic

¹⁶ Contained in the 2019 report Doctoral education in Europe today: approaches and institutional structures (2017–2018)- available at <https://eua-cde.org/reports-publications.html>.

career framework in technological universities have been well documented ([OECD review](#))¹⁷. Ideally, TU Dublin would wish to see the OECD recommendations implemented quickly to support its research ambitions. We have included stretch targets in our Strategic Plan, should these recommendations be implemented. The more modest targets are provided for this Performance Objective meanwhile.

Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 3

Management and reporting will be as set out in Section 1. The Sponsor for Performance Objective 3 is the Vice President for Research & Innovation; the Leads are the Head of Research Support (for Research Active Staff) and the Head of the Graduate Research School (for PGRs).

To ensure **delivery**, a number of actions are planned, including:

- The launch of five TU Dublin Research Hubs that will support development of cross-disciplinary teams and manage a range of research infrastructures. Academic and operational Leads will carry out horizon scanning for research opportunities, help create interdisciplinary teams for proposal development and form strategic research partnerships (notably through participation in the “European Research Institutes” being created as part of the EUt+ alliance to foster research collaboration between alliance member universities).
- Offering supports to assist researchers to participate in large-scale initiatives funded through Horizon Europe and other EU programmes and to deepen relationships with partner universities in EUt+ so that they become preferred partners in applications for funding for collaborative EU research grants (and vice versa).
- A drive for engagement with Irish Research Performance Organisation (RPO) partners in national research centres and other programmes, notably SFI research centres.
- Establishment of a team of four Strategic Research Proposal Coordinators in the Pre-Award team of Research Support Services who will develop and proactively offer specialised supports for researchers seeking funding in particular discipline areas and types of funding schemes.
- Campus infrastructure development — the aim is to deliver the FOCAS Institute project on the Grangegorman campus, and actively seek funding for new capital projects to support increased R&I activity.
- Offering supports to new lecturing staff, including tailored workloads, access to research infrastructure, and development and training to assist them in developing their R&I activity.

¹⁷ OECD (2022), “A review of technological university academic career paths, contracts and organisation in Ireland”, OECD Education Policy Perspectives, No. 64, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/2b7ee217-en>.

- Focusing on growing the size and diversity of our base of post-doctoral researchers and career researchers, supporting them to perform excellent and impactful research whilst providing a bespoke career development programme.
- Enhancement of our PGR programmes to ensure students are equipped with the supports and the discipline-specific, professional and transversal skills they need to be successful.
- Leveraging relationships with external partners, offering targeted PGR opportunities.
- Enhancing research supervisory capacity by 1) putting in place supports for existing academic staff to register for and complete doctoral qualifications; 2) ensuring that research capability and potential are assessed as part of the recruitment process for new academic staff; and 3) prioritising supports for new supervisors.
- Advocating for changes to nationally agreed TU career frameworks and workload allocation models that will incentivise, acknowledge, and reward R&I activity.

Resource Provision: To support the research community, TU Dublin has put in place a comprehensive R&I function, comprising five teams: Graduate Research School; Research Support Services; Innovation & Knowledge Transfer; R&I Engagement & Impact; and Research Integrity & Ethics. There is a dedicated budget assigned for R&I support. In addition to the creation of the five Research Hubs, Faculty Heads of Research work to help identify and facilitate multidisciplinary research across the University.

The University has secured resources under the [TU RISE](#) programme that will provide complementary supports. It will fund five R&I enterprise support teams, each comprising one Business Development Manager and 15 post-doctoral researchers (in total), to broker and develop relationships between university experts and regionally based enterprises. The programme will support embedding an ethos of enterprise support across our R&I community, leveraging university–industry collaboration in R&I activity to address societal challenges and generate societal impact.

Evaluating Progress: TU Dublin Information Technology (IT) systems will be used to capture relevant data. The annual SRS returns will be used to monitor student data. HR Core has been updated and integrated across the University and will provide the up-to-date staff data required. In addition, the new PURE (Research Information System) will provide the other measures required to monitor the KPIs. Monitoring of progress will be conducted by the Sponsor and Lead (as per process set out in Section 1).

Risk management: A key risk for this PO relates to the restrictions in the national academic career framework and workload model, factors that can affect the development and support for, and the retention of, research-active staff over time. Actions are already being pursued by the TU sector as a group to advocate for change in these areas. Separately, TU Dublin has developed its own draft model as an interim approach to workload management, consistent with current contractual arrangements, to enable academic staff to engage more in research. It continues to work with stakeholders with the aim of moving to implementation.

In parallel, Research Hub and School plans, with specific local targets, will drive implementation and will be monitored tightly to enable the overall University targets to be achieved; whilst initiatives by the Research Support Team (as indicated above) will underpin an increased number of research-active staff, assisting them to secure research funding and postgraduate scholarships, and promoting and celebrating research achievements.

Additionally, enhancement of recruitment practices is being pursued to attract academic staff with potential to engage in high-impact R&I activity.

Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 3

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
3.1	Proportion (%) of academic staff who are research active	(Staff data from Q4 Staff Return to HEA)	Quantitative	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	21.0% (271)	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 enrolled as a % of total enrolments, L8-L10	HEA SRS and System Performance Dashboard	Quantitative	4% as of March 2023 (679 Students)	TU Sector Average (4% in 2022/23)	4.0% (658)	4.2% (686)	4.5% (764)	4.5% (867)	4.5% as of March 2028 0.5 p.p. increase on baseline
3.3	Average time to completion for full-time PhD/DMus candidates	Internal SRMS	Quantitative	Average 4.9 years for those submitting theses in academic year 2023/24	3.5–4.5 years EUA CDE 2019 Report (Ref: footnote 16)	4.8 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	Quantitative	2023/24: 86%		87%	88%	89%	90%	90% as of Aug 2028 4 p.p. increase on baseline

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
3.5	Proportion (%) of full-time Postgraduate Research Students who successfully complete	Internal SRMS	Quantitative	To be determined at end of 2026/27	66% EUA CDE 2019 Report (Ref: footnote 16)	Not available	Not available	68%	69%	To be provided once baseline is available

Performance Objective 4

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

Pillar: Access & Participation

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

Rationale for Performance Objective 4

Since establishment, TU Dublin has maintained a diverse student population and leveraged the experience of its founding institutions in widening participation and attracting and successfully supporting diverse learners. These include full-time students traditionally known as ‘Access’ students – from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds; students with disabilities; mature students; and students from the Irish Traveller and Roma communities. In the full-time category for widening participation, we also include those students entering through Further Education routes.

A priority in our Strategic Intent 2030 is to be the most accessible university in Ireland, with the largest number of diverse learners. This aligns with the [National Access Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success In Higher Education 2022–2028](#) (NAP), the overall ambition of which is to create an inclusive and diverse higher education sector.

An overarching ambition of NAP is that the higher education student body, at all levels and across all programmes, reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland’s population. NAP identifies four main groups who are under-represented in higher education; these are students who:

1. are socio-economically disadvantaged (SED)
2. new mature entrants from socio-economically disadvantaged areas (ME)
3. have disabilities, including intellectual disabilities (SWD)
4. are members of Irish Traveller and Roma communities

Aligned to the ambitions in NAP, we have established four key targets, outlined below.

Socio-economically Disadvantaged Students:

In 2020/21, TU Dublin had the highest number of total disadvantaged students in the sector (2,062).¹⁸ The percentage of new entrants (aged 18–20) from socio-economically disadvantaged areas (SED) was 12.8%; the equivalent for all HEIs was 11%. Our target to 2028 is to increase the percentage to 14%. A

¹⁸ Based on RGAM 2023 Allocation (HEA)

disproportionate number of disadvantaged communities are evident in parts of Dublin city centre, and in the north and west suburbs of Dublin. These communities experience significantly higher levels of unemployment and low educational attainment. The findings of the most recent [Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2022](#) (DIS) are that many disadvantaged communities have become further disadvantaged, with an increase in the number of people living in areas classed as very or extremely disadvantaged. By improving links with FE colleges, DEIS schools and local communities, we aim to attract higher numbers of students from these communities. We will support this objective through our recruitment and outreach activities and by strengthening links with FE, as well as through innovation in our programme offering. HEA PATH 3 funding initiatives have facilitated collaborative community project work with organisations such as: Empowering People in Care (EPIC), which undertakes research on care-experienced students accessing higher education; Empower, which works to develop anti-racist practice in community and higher education; and Dublin’s North Inner City Learning Neighbourhood, in collaboration with CDETB.

Mature Students

NAP aims to increase the percentage of mature new entrants from SED backgrounds (as a % of all disadvantaged new entrants), from 11% (all HEIs) in 2019/20 to 20% in 2027/8 (NAP, p.73). In 2020/21, the percentage of these students in TU Dublin was 18%. We aim to increase this to 20% by 2028.

Students with a Disability

In 2022/23, the percentage of all new entrants with a disability (SWD) in TU Dublin was 16.2%¹⁹; this compared to 13.8% for all HEIs.²⁰ The NAP has set a specific target, to increase the percentage of SWD to 16% by 2028 (NAP, p.73). TU Dublin has already exceeded the national target for participation by SWD and is committed to increasing the percentage to 17% over the period of this Performance Agreement. This will exceed the national target for all HEIs of 16%. TU Dublin has made a submission through PATH 4 phase 2 funding to introduce the ‘Learning Together’ programme. This programme is aimed specifically at students with intellectual disabilities, who are now identified in the National Access Plan.

Participation by Traveller & Roma Communities

In 2022/23, an estimated 0.1% of new entrants in HE identified as members of the Irish Traveller and Roma Communities. The NAP target is to increase this to 0.35%. Based on HEA RGAM data for 2021, there were 119 Travellers in all Irish HEIs, 33 of which were new entrants. TU Dublin will continue to support progress toward increasing participation by Traveller and Roma students under PATH 5. Specific targets are not included in the indicator table for this cohort, due to small numbers and to protect the anonymity of students.

¹⁹ HEA System Performance Dashboard (2022/23)

²⁰ Derived from HEA System Performance Dashboard (2022/23)

We have also set targets for enhanced progression in the different cohorts:

Target Progression Rates for SED

The goal of the NAP is to increase progression and completion among selected priority groups. In 2021/22, the non-progression rate among HEIs in Ireland was 15%.²¹ The rate of non-progression for disadvantaged students was much higher at 23% (HEA 2024, p.21).²² Based on the most recent geo-coding data available, the non-progression rate for SED students in TU Dublin between 2019/20 and 2020/21 was 17.5%. With further access to HEA geo-coding data, we can start to monitor progression rates for SED students more effectively and develop appropriate targets for this cohort.

Target Progression Rates for SWD

TU Dublin is committed to increasing the percentage of all new entrants with a disability to 17% over the period of this Performance Agreement and to ensuring that these students complete their programme successfully. In 2022/23, 85% of students (who availed of the Fund for Students with a Disability (FSD)), who entered TU Dublin in 2021/22 progressed to year 2, giving a non-progression rate of 15%, which is lower than the rate of non-progression for all new entrants of 24%. We plan to maintain the high level of progression among this cohort of students, and if possible, increase the rate of progression to 86%.

Target for Progression from Further Education (FE) to TU Dublin.

In 2022/23, 6% of new entrants to TU Dublin were from FE — the rate for all HEIs is 4.5%. TU Dublin aims to increase the number of students transitioning from FE over the period of our Performance Agreement. Our target is to increase the number from 312 (2022/23) to 400 in 2027/8, with FE students accounting for 7% of new entrants.

Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 4

Management and reporting will be as set out in Section 1. The Sponsor for Performance Objective 4 is the Registrar & Deputy President; the Lead is the Head of Recruitment, Admissions & Participation.

TU Dublin will continue to implement and enhance a range of actions to ensure **delivery** of the objective, including:

- Advocacy and promotion campaign for ‘access’ opportunities, through activities that include open days; school liaison — particularly with DEIS schools and FE colleges; collaborative initiatives with local communities; and dedicated outreach work to empower potential students to consider a higher education option.

²¹ Analysis of Non-Progression among Higher Education New Entrants in Ireland, 2016/17 to 2021/22 (HEA, 2024, p.4 and p.9)

²² Analysis of Non-Progression among Higher Education New Entrants in Ireland, 2016/17 to 2021/22 (HEA, 2024, p.21).

- Enhancement of the [CAO Hub](#) on the TU Dublin website, to provide the most relevant information for potential Access students, with targeted guidance on entry routes and assistance with applications.
- Provision, promotion and communication of the full range of financial and other student supports available.
- Provision of a range of Access entry routes, to provide flexibility and support families and communities experiencing the transition to higher education for the first time. As well as the national HEAR and DARE schemes, ‘Access TU Dublin’ is a bespoke entry route which gives a level of flexibility and support to applicants, with additional assistance provided in respect of the application process.
- Provision of the Access Foundation Programme, a one-year full-time course preparing students, both personally and academically, to pursue undergraduate programmes at TU Dublin. Graduates from the programme have an opportunity to transition to undergraduate courses across a range of disciplines offered in TU Dublin.

Resource Provision: TU Dublin has put in place a dedicated Access and Outreach Team (seven roles) that focuses on a range of activities designed to break down the barriers between higher education and under-served communities. Close cooperation with targeted schools at primary and post-primary level, and with community groups, is a hallmark of this activity, as is the maintenance of the expert levels of understanding and context-specific knowledge needed to assist students from under-represented backgrounds to access TU Dublin. Links with other parts of the University, particularly Student Supports, are also critical to ensure that students can access the full range of supports available to them post entry.

Evaluating Progress: The University’s SRMS systems and annual SRS returns will be used to monitor student data, along with DIS-related data provided by the HEA. Historically, there have been challenges regarding the ‘Access student’ data. With the integration of the University’s data through the new SRMS in 2025 and linkage with geo-coding data, it is expected that more efficient collation, interrogation and analysis of data will be available and facilitate enhanced decision-making. Monitoring of progress will be conducted by the Sponsor and Lead (as per process set out in Section 1).

Risk Management: The following are key risks to meeting our targets. The impact of sectoral changes, for example, the expansion of the FET sector, could have a negative impact on our first-year enrolments, particularly Access and mature students. Secondly, given the significant cohort of Access students already within the University, further substantial growth of Access enrolments may put pressure on student supports. Also, given the strong correlation between non-progression and CAO entry points, and non-progression and socio-economic disadvantage (DIS), there is a substantial risk that if we further increase the number of students from groups that are under-represented in higher education, our rates of retention and progression will be affected.

Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 4

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
4.1	Proportion (%) of new entrants (aged 18–20) from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas	SRS Data, HEA Dashboard	Quantitative	2020/21: 12.8%	Average, all HEIs (11% in 2020/21)	13%	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 and System Performance Dashboard	Quantitative	2020/21: 18%	Average, all HEI (17% in 2020/21)	18%	18.5%	19%	20%	2 p.p. increase on baseline
4.3	Proportion (%) of new entrants with a disability	HEA SRS and System Performance Dashboard	Quantitative	2022/23: 16.2%	Average, all HEIs (13.9% in 2022/23)	16.4%	16.6%	16.7%	17%	0.8 p.p. increase on baseline
4.4	Non-Progression rate (%) new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas	HEA SRS and System Performance Dashboard	Quantitative	2019/20: 17.5%	In 2020/21 (NAP, p.73) Non-Progression for all HEIs: 12%; TUs: 19% Benchmark for TU Dublin in 2022/23 from geo-coding data tbc.	17.5%	17%	16.5%	16%	1.5 p.p. decrease on baseline

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
4.5	Progression rate (%) for Students with Disabilities	HEA SRS (FSD)	Quantitative	2022/23: 85% (243 students)	Not Available	85%	85%	86%	86%	1 p.p. increase on baseline
4.6	Proportion (%) of new entrants from FE	HEA SRS and System Performance Dashboard	Quantitative	2022/23: 6.2% (312 students)	Average, all HEIs (4.5% in 2022/23)	6.3% (335)	6.4% (350)	6.5% (380)	7% (400)	0.8 p.p. increase on baseline

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.

Pillar: Engagement

Transversals: Climate & Sustainable Development; Enterprise; Region.

Rationale for Performance Objective 5

In our [Strategic Intent 2030](#), we state that: “We will be a leader and a voice for sustainability, a way of living and working in a new, more balanced way, a way that protects our planet for future generations. We will work with stakeholders to solve some of the world’s most pressing problems and champion these issues at local, national and global level.”

R&I is critical to developing deep insights into the origins and drivers of these problems, and, crucially, to developing and delivering novel solutions. We believe that multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are key enablers for the delivery of significant impact, and that to maximise this impact, R&I work should be carried out internally and with external parties who can help us convert new knowledge into tangible benefits.

TU Dublin has always been at the forefront of Irish Higher Education’s knowledge transfer (KT) activity. Through patenting and licensing, enterprise development and services such as [Open Labs](#), TU Dublin provides market-focused initiatives that can help harness the extensive range of research, knowledge and expertise of the University as a powerful support to enterprise. Partnerships and active engagement are key to this activity. Since its foundation, [TU Dublin Innovation](#) has executed over 230 licence agreements, created over 40 spin outs, engaged in over 1,000 industry projects and won 4 KTI Impact Awards. The Office is widely known to be pragmatic and flexible, adopting best innovation office practices, serving TU Dublin staff across five campus locations.

Within the Strategic Intent 2030, TU Dublin set out its ambition to be “a University of open innovation – supporting and growing our portfolio of creative and entrepreneurial endeavours.” The [Strategic Plan 2024–2028](#) goals are: “We wish to leverage TU Dublin’s leadership role in KT in Irish HE, and increase the volume of licences granted for commercial application and grow the number of start-ups created/ supported” and “We intend to build on the enterprise frameworks that exist within the University and amongst our partners – to ‘dare to discover’ and develop and embed entrepreneurial mind-sets in the TU Dublin community and support the creation of new products and new start-up ventures.”

The [National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030](#) acknowledges the need for greater investment in R&D and the development of our knowledge transfer systems, so that HEIs can “connect to enterprise

and society in new and imaginative ways to harness its potential for economic and social well-being”. A specific recommendation is that “Knowledge transfer should be better embedded into institutional activity and rewarded accordingly. The commercialisation of intellectual property from publicly-funded research should primarily provide a gross return to the economy”.

[Impact2030](#) recognises the particular role of Technological Universities in regional development, with a goal to position them as “key anchors for sustainable regions, deepening collaboration with industry and enterprise, developing clusters of technology and expertise, and opening up business opportunities regionally and nationally”.

TU Dublin’s strategic priorities aim to maintain the leadership that the University has had in this area, and to continue to contribute to overall enterprise and economic development, both regionally and nationally. With a range of specialised research centres, incubators, gateways and innovation labs that provide support and resources, TU Dublin has supported the development of existing enterprises and contributed to the creation of new businesses in the region. TU Dublin is particularly successful in the development of new products and new ventures in the Life Sciences, Food, ICT, Software, Industrial Technology, Manufacturing and Clean Technologies. Some of the TU Dublin technologies currently available for licence can be found [here](#). Also featured are a number of TU Dublin spin outs such as; [Kastus®](#), [Micron Agritech](#) and [Ocumetra](#).

In evaluating TU Dublin’s KT performance, a comparison with other HEIs was conducted. Drawn from the [KTI Annual Surveys](#), it can be seen that TU Dublin ranks among the top performers in HE in licencing and spin out creation. The chart below shows the level of activity on both metrics, for the selected HEIs in the Dublin region (DCU, MU, TCD and UCD) and the other Technological Universities (ATU, MTU, SETU and TUS). It shows the number of licences or spin outs per €10m of research expenditure, averaged across the period 2019–2022. According to this data, TU Dublin leads the way in terms of spin out creation, and follows DCU in terms of licencing.

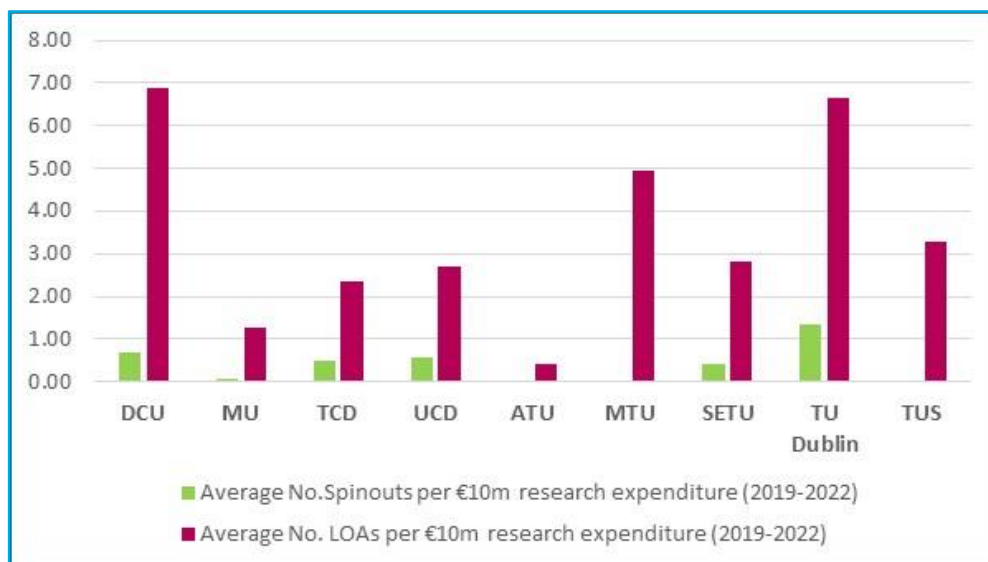


Figure 5: Spin out and Licencing activity by HEI – 2019–2022 (KTI Annual Surveys)

Given the University’s ambition to grow research activity over the coming years, and recognising that there may be a time lag in outputs resulting from that, the priority for TU Dublin is to maintain its leadership in this space and achieve a position of top-three performer nationally, in terms of the number of licences granted and spin outs created.

Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 5

Management and reporting on this objective will be as set out in Section 1. The Sponsor for Performance Objective 5 is the Vice President for Research & Innovation; the Lead is the Head of Innovation & Knowledge Transfer.

Delivery. The growth of research income is a critical target for the University. It will help develop the pipeline of TU Dublin’s intellectual property that will underpin licencing and spin out opportunities. In tandem, the TU Dublin Innovation Office will lead a campaign of marketing initiatives and Innovation Clinics on ideation, industry collaboration and spin out formation, to promote commercialisation and entrepreneurship. The KT Case Managers will focus on high-quality spin outs, licenses and large industry collaborations and the Office will enhance its business intelligence and innovation processes so as to achieve high impact KT outcomes. It is intended to make use of innovation platforms (such as [IN-PART](#) or [Innoget](#)) to market licensable technology.

Increased involvement in SFI centres, EI Technology Centres & Gateways to create more spin out opportunities will be a focus and it is intended that KT and entrepreneurship training will be made available to all postdoctoral researchers.

TU Dublin’s Partnerships function will establish, maintain and leverage relationships through a clearly identifiable and readily accessible ‘Enterprise Portal’, designed to foster impactful partnerships and increase industry collaborations.

[GrowthHub](#) (funded under HCI) has in place training and supports to activate entrepreneurial mind-sets and will be drawn upon to stimulate baseline activity and help broaden the KT community. In addition, Entrepreneurship Ambassadors will be identified to advocate for entrepreneurship as a valued and respected career opportunity. This will all be part of an overall KT awareness campaign.

Resource Provision. TU Dublin has successfully secured support under the ‘KT Boost’ fund, which provides resources for the University’s KT plans for the next four years. This support includes funding towards KT Case Managers and operational costs. The University will continue to support key Innovation Office roles (Head of Innovation & Knowledge Transfer, Business Development Manager and Administrator) through core funding. In addition, there is a commitment to cover initial patenting and legal fees, and for marketing and communications efforts across the University and externally. In addition, the University secured funding through TU-RISE scheme, which will, inter alia, provide resources for the formation of a number of enterprise engagement teams targeting sectors prioritised in the [National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation, 2022–2027](#).

Evaluating Progress. TU Dublin MIS systems will be used to capture relevant data. Local KT systems held by TU Dublin Innovation will be used to track licences and spin out data. In addition, the new PURE (Research Information System) will provide the other metrics required to monitor the KPIs. Monitoring of progress will be conducted by the Sponsor and Lead (as per the process set out in Section 1, p6).

Risk Management. As previously mentioned, a key risk for the KT objectives relates to the dependency on growth in research activity. These risks are identified on p.25 & p.26 and will be monitored by the Vice President for Research & Innovation.

Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 5

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
5.1	Number of licence agreements executed	KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey	Quantitative	10 2022	Average across Dublin Region Unis + TUs (11 in 2022)	15	15	17	18	65 new licence agreements over 4 years
5.2	Number of spin-outs established	KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey	Quantitative	1 2022	Average across Dublin Region Unis + TUs (1.8 in 2022)	2	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.

Pillar: Engagement

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

Rationale for Performance Objective 6

TU Dublin aims to be recognised as an exemplar in EDI as set out in its Strategic Intent to 2030. In order to achieve this ambition, EDI has been prioritised as a focus area in the TU Dublin Strategic Plan 2024–2028. An overarching aspect of the EDI agenda, and underpinning our Athena Swan action plan, is to support a culture of equity and inclusion within the University. An annual staff survey will be conducted and used to assess TU Dublin’s progress in this regard — a key indicator will be the percentage of staff that believe we have such a culture.

For the indicator on ‘culture of inclusion’, we will use two questions in the staff survey to monitor progress.²³ The two questions in the survey were: (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 78% and for (ii) was 72%; together these give a score for ‘inclusion’ of 75%.

The combined score of 75% is below the ‘Ireland norm’ of 87% in 2023 (which includes public and private sector organisations).²⁴ The university norm (78%) provides a better benchmark; however, this is based solely on question two. As we consider both questions in our staff survey to be important as indicators of a culture of inclusion, we have decided to use the combined score for TU Dublin and to benchmark against the university norm. Monitoring of progress generally will be conducted by the Sponsor and Lead (as per process set out in Section 1).

A major strand within our EDI ambition is an Athena Swan target of: (i) renewing the Institutional Bronze award, and (ii) attaining a number of Faculty and departmental Athena Swan Bronze awards over the course of the Performance Agreement. To date, TU Dublin has achieved an Institutional Bronze award and a Bronze award for the School of Mathematics and Statistics. Our plan is to renew

²³ The first round of the survey was conducted in February 2024, through an independent third party, and the combined score/average for inclusion was 75. A total of 1,601 staff responded, giving a response rate of 45%.

²⁴ This comparative data was provided by the independent survey company from their 2023 dataset.

our institutional Bronze award in 2025/26 and to apply for an Institutional Silver award in 2028. Two universities (UL and TCD) had attained a Silver award as of April 2024.²⁵

The Gender Equality: Report of the Expert Group 2022 has stated that “there is now an opportunity for [technological universities] to ensure that gender equality is central to their mission as they develop new structures and policies”. Establishing a new organisational structure was fundamental in the transition to TU Dublin. The University recognised that the Organisational Design (OD) project had a major role to play in supporting its EDI ambitions. ‘Inclusive’ was a key principle adopted for the OD process, which aimed to mainstream EDI into the organisation.

New roles have been appointed since 2019 to support the culture that is required to drive this agenda. A new Vice President for Organisation, Change and Culture and the Director of EDI now co-sponsor the multi-faceted equality agenda at the University Executive Team level and lead its implementation. An active Governing Body EDI Committee engages at a strategic level across the University on Athena Swan. Our new Faculty and School structures have specific responsibility for implementing EDI and a revised quality assurance process ensures that programme reviews tackle matters of gender and other equality deficiencies.

In DFHERIS’s Statement of Strategy 2021–2023, ‘Champion Equality’ is outlined as a main initiative under the strategic goal ‘Inclusion’. Promoting female leadership in academia is outlined as a requisite. Prior to becoming a university, TU Dublin had a ratio of F 46%: M 55%, which did not align with the university sector average (F 55%: M 45%). In applying for an institutional Athena Swan Bronze award in 2022, TU Dublin made significant progress in terms of its gender make-up in leadership positions (Figure 6).





















Decision-making body	Position December 2021		Position December 2022	
Governing Body	 48%	 52%	 56%	 44%
University Executive Team (UET)	 33%	 67%	 33%	 67%
Academic Council	 43%	 57%	 51%	 49%
Heads of School	 35%	 65%	 40%	 60%
Heads of Professional Services	 54%	 46%	 58%	 42%

Figure 6: TU Dublin – Gender at Senior Levels (2022)

²⁵[Athena Swan Ireland - List of Award Holders - as of 11 April 2024.pdf \(advance-he.ac.uk\)](#).

At TU Dublin, STEM accounts for nearly half of student enrolments. The University is the largest provider of STEM education in the country, offering almost one fifth of the national provision. The University is also one of the largest providers of apprenticeship programmes in Ireland.²⁶ Male student enrolments dominate in each of these individual fields of study, in line with global and national trends.²⁷ Although initiatives introduced to change this pattern of gender inequality have shown signs of progress, the gender challenge remains significant. By contrast, enrolments in AHSSBL subjects at TU Dublin show an inverse trend, which equally needs to be addressed.

Improving equality in research in the higher education landscape has come into sharp focus in recent years. An initiative to tackle this issue, as noted by the Gender Equality Expert Group Report (2022), was a measure introduced by the HEA to link Athena Swan attainment to research funding eligibility. The Gender Equality report stated that “Athena Swan” has acted as a ‘game-changer’ in terms of awareness of gender inequality across Irish HEIs; however, many barriers remain for the newly established technological universities inhibiting attainment of the same levels of progress as traditional universities. TU Dublin welcomes DFHERIS’s commitment to developing restructured career paths to address some of these issues²⁸.

Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 6

Management and reporting will be as set out in Section 1. The Sponsor for Performance Objective 6 is the Vice President for Organisation, Change & Culture; the Lead is the Director of EDI.

Delivery: A detailed [Action Plan](#), developed as part of the Athena Swan Bronze award is in place. This action plan underpins the progression towards achievement of future awards.

In addition to meeting the targets established for this performance objective, we plan to apply for an Institutional Athena Swan Silver award in 2028.

In terms of **resourcing**:

- The University has committed wholeheartedly to EDI and has had in place a Director of EDI from the time of designation. The more recently appointed Vice President for Organisation, Change and Culture co-sponsors the multi-faceted EDI agenda at senior level.
- The EDI team is now being expanded, with a Senior Manager role and two EDI Leads, one of whom will have a specific focus on Athena Swan activity.
- In addition, colleagues will be assigned (through workload allowance) at Faculty and School level to support the Athena Swan process.
- The HR function will provide the necessary staff data for evaluation and monitoring.

²⁶ [HEA Statistics Dashboard](#)

²⁷ TU Dublin Athena Swan Bronze Application

²⁸ [HEA Gender Equality Report 2022](#)

- There is a section of the EDI budget set aside for supporting Athena Swan developments.
- Resources and good practices will be drawn from a number of initiatives that the University is leading, including [NEXUS](#), involving 9 European institutions aiming to advance institutional change through the development of inclusive Gender Equality Plans.

Evaluating Progress: TU Dublin MIS systems will be used to capture relevant data, particularly for Athena Swan activity. This will be primarily the HR Core system, which has been updated and integrated across the University, and will provide the up-to-date staff data required. A dedicated data analyst in the HR function will provide the necessary data to the EDI team and the Athena Swan working teams. Reporting from the system will be updated as required to enhance the quality and efficiency of analysis.

Risk Management: A general risk relating to this performance objective concerns the administrative burden in the Athena Swan process and whether Faculties and Schools can balance resources appropriately to be able to make the commitment to the application process. The broader risk for the University relates to the early stage that TU Dublin is at in terms of Athena Swan itself – it means that it will take some time to move up the learning curve, with the preparation of applications likely to take longer initially and thus affecting potential target dates. This will continue to be monitored by the Director of EDI.

Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 6

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
6.1	Proportion (%) of staff that believe TU Dublin has an equitable and inclusive culture ²⁹	TU Dublin Employee Engagement Survey	Quantitative	May 2024: 75%	Average result amongst universities, as per source database in employee survey (78% in May 2024)	75%	76%	77%	78%	78% 3 p.p. increase on baseline
6.2	Achievement of renewed Institutional Athena Swan Bronze award	Athena Swan Ireland	Quantitative and Qualitative	2022/23: Institutional Bronze award achieved	Only one university (MU) had renewed its Bronze award by Nov 2023		Bronze renewal			1 Renewal of Institutional Athena SWAN Bronze award
6.3	Proportion (%) of schools with Athena Swan Bronze awards	Athena Swan Ireland	Quantitative	2022/23: 1 Bronze award at Departmental level 4% of TU Dublin Schools	Dublin region Unis: Departmental Awards TCD (16 – 67%) UCD (14 – 47%) DCU (8 – 19%) MU (15 – 50%) TUs: (SETU) 1 Departmental & 1 Faculty as of Nov 23	27% 1 Faculty 1 School	31% 1 School	46% 1 Faculty 1 School	61% 1 Faculty 1 School	61% of TU Dublin Schools with Athena Swan Bronze Awards 3 new Faculties and 7 new Schools

²⁹ 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.

Section 3: Matrix and Signatures

Framework Matrix

		Pillars			
		Teaching & Learning	Research & Innovation	Access & Participation	Engagement
Transversal areas of impact	Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning	PO 1			
	Climate & Sustainable Development	PO 2	PO 3		PO 5
	Student Success	PO 1		PO 4	
	Enterprise		PO 3		PO 5
	Society	PO 2		PO 4	PO 6
	Region		PO 3	PO 4	PO 5
	International	PO 1			
	Digital Transformation				
	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging			PO 4	PO 6
	Institutional Leadership & Culture	PO 2			PO 6
	Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion				

Signatures

On behalf of Technological University Dublin



Professor John Doran
President

Tuesday, 12 November 2024



Dr Charles Larkin
Chair of the Governing Body

Tuesday, 12 November 2024

On behalf of the Higher Education Authority



Dr Alan Wall
Chief Executive Officer

Tuesday, 12 November 2024



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