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

**NOTES FOR COMPLETION**

* Case studies should relate to your institution's healthy campus initiative.
* Where possible send a photograph or illustration, links, or resources to accompany your case study.
* It is recognised that not all sections will be relevant to all case studies – the proforma is designed to offer consistency across a range of case studies.
* Case studies will be used as part of HEA communications including email, website, and social media.
* Case studies should be written in the third person and anonymous when it comes to participants’ names.
* Please be as **concise and clear** as possible and consider the use of bullet points to summarise information.
* Please submit your case study to [healthycampus@hea.ie](mailto:healthycampus@hea.ie).

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| **HEALTHY CAMPUS CASE STUDY** | |
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| **Name of Institution/ Organisation** | University College Cork and Munster Technological University. |
| **Who lead the initiative?** | * Co-Leads: Dr Michael Byrne (UCC) & Dr Andrea Bickerdike (MTU) * Supported by a collaborative inter-institutional team (Dr Susan Calnan, Dr Cian O’Neill, Dr Seán Millar, Ms Lauren Muttucomaroe, and Ms Viviane Oliveira) |
| **Date and timeframe of the initiative** | January 2023 – December 2024. |
| **What was the reach of the initiative?** | This was a novel inter-institutional research collaboration to inform the implementation of the HEA Healthy Campus Charter and Framework at both UCC and MTU. The collaboration involved the dissemination of bespoke health and wellbeing web-based questionnaire instruments to all registered students and staff of UCC and MTU, in addition to a comprehensive qualitative consultation with campus stakeholders from both institutions.  The project’s final report was launched on 4th December 2024, and comprised findings from 1,246 student and 862 staff participants in the quantitative research phase, in addition to 24 campus stakeholders who participated in the qualitative consultation. |
| **Initiative Title** | UCC & MTU Healthy Campus Research Collaboration to Inform the Implementation of the HEA Healthy Campus Framework. |
| **Aims/ Objectives** | 1. Present a descriptive analysis (stratified by gender) of quantitative health and wellbeing indicators reported by students and staff. 2. Examine the association(s) between demographic characteristics, self-reported health and lifestyle indicators, and subjective mental wellbeing amongst both students and staff. 3. Qualitatively explore the perspectives and lived experiences of key campus stakeholders at UCC and MTU regarding campus services/facilities, and the implementation of the HEA Healthy Campus Framework. 4. Map and examine the potential ecological reach of a subset of health-related services and supports at both UCC and MTU. |
| **The rationale for the action, including any identified health needs** | Building on a long-standing legacy of academic partnership, University College Cork (UCC) and Munster Technological University (MTU) committed to engage in an inter-institutional research collaboration that would serve to empirically inform each institution’s implementation of the HEA Healthy Campus Framework. |
| **Identify all frameworks, policies, or strategies this initiative aligns to**  **(internal, local or national)** | * Okanagan Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges * HEA Healthy Campus Charter and Framework. * HEA National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework * *Healthy Ireland @ Work* Framework |
| **Summary** | In direct alignment with the HEA Healthy Campus Framework Principles of ‘participation’ and ‘partnership’, University College Cork (UCC) and Munster Technological University (MTU) signed the Healthy Campus Charter at a collaborative ceremony held in UCC on 9th January 2023. Building on a long-standing legacy of academic partnership, UCC and MTU also agreed to engage in an inter-institutional research collaboration that would serve to empirically inform each institution’s Strategic Action Plan to implement the HEA Healthy Campus Framework.  In alignment with Phase 3 (i.e. ‘Consult’) of the Healthy Campus Framework, this research aimed to identify thematic priorities amongst a heterogeneous target population comprised of students and staff across two distinct universities, spanning seven regional campuses in the southwest region. The overarching methodology was adapted from previous similar work conducted at MTU (Bickerdike et al., 2023), comprising a mixed-methods, dual strand (QUAN-QUAL) study design.  ***Key Quantitative Findings*** (n=1,246 students, n=862 staff)   * 42.0% of students and 56.7% of staff were classified as physically ‘active’ * Only 16.6% of students and 25.2% of staff reported habitual consumption of ≥5 daily servings of fruit and vegetables. * The cumulative calculated prevalence of ‘overweight/obesity’ was 35.3% amongst students, and 51.8% amongst staff. * 77.8% of students and 62.4% of staff reported that they had engaged in binge drinking (defined as the consumption of 6 or more drinks on a single occasion). * Overall, 24.7% of students reported using e-cigarettes or ‘vapes * Over half (51.0%) of students reported that they had used cannabis during their lifetime, and 19% of male students had used cannabis within 30 days of data collection. * Recent sleep quality was rated as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’ by 30.4% of students and 22.5% of staff. * Overall, 22.2% of students rated their mental health as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’. * Students’ most common stressors were ‘college workload’ (72.0% either highly/often stressed), ‘studies in general’ (71.6%), and ‘exams’ (69.3%). * Workload’ (59.5%), ‘pressure to work outside of normal hours’ (33.3%), and ‘family situation’ (32.1%) were the most commonly perceived psychological stressors amongst staff.   ***During qualitative consultation sessions, stakeholders emphasised:***   * The critical need to embed the implementation of the HEA Healthy Campus Framework in an approach formally endorsed by Senior Management. * The need for evaluation of campus infrastructural capacity, in addition to the healthfulness of campus food environments. * A perceived culture of high workloads, constituting a potent barrier to health and wellbeing. * The need to structurally enable participation from both students and staff in all and any ‘Healthy Campus’ initiatives. |
| **Did you collaborate with internal and/or external stakeholders to deliver?** | This research was a novel inter-institutional collaboration, and its delivery was endorsed and supported by Senior Management stakeholders at both UCC and MTU. The research was enabled by pooled HEA Healthy Campus seed funding. |
| **How was the initiative organised?** |  |
| **What resources did you need?** | This research was facilitated by pooled HEA Healthy Campus Seed Funding. |
| **Has it been evaluated? How successful has it been?** | Key outputs have included:   * Poster dissemination at the 16th European Public Health Conference (Calnan et al., 2024) at the National Convention Centre, Dublin. * Interim reports within each institution. * Presentation to UCC Staff Wellbeing Team in January 2024. * Publication and presentation of final report in December 2024. |
| **Any future plans, including the sustainability of the initiative?** | The current collaboration has served to further strengthen collaborative partnerships between both respective institutions (i.e., UCC and MTU), and will serve as the basis for future collaborative approaches with regard to the implementation of initiatives and activities aligned with the HEA Healthy Campus Charter and Framework. |
| **Key Learning Points** | * This research collaboration substantiated the need for a designated ‘Healthy Campus’ research strategy, and the development of an aligned complement of evaluation indicators. * The quantitative instruments should be disseminated every new 4-year academic cycle. * Healthy Campus strategies and actions should encompass an equitable consideration for students and staff. * Healthy Campus activities should be embedded within academic curricula (students) and the ‘core’ working day (staff). * Healthy Campus structures should encompass thematic working groups, with an emphasis on physical activity, nutrition, alcohol consumption, substance use, and sleep. * Cross-sectoral partnerships are required to advocate for socioeconomic equity, and to enable students and staff in critical need of campus supports to access same in a timely manner. * Nurturing internal partnerships and increasing engagement with existing campus facilities, interventions and resources should be prioritised in the first instance. * Comprehensive assessments of, and evidence-based interventions to support healthy dietary choices within, campus food environments are warranted. |

**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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| **Links** | Please see attached images. |