



DCU Excellence and Opportunity

Supporter Update 2023/24



Iontaobhas Oideachasúil
Educational Trust

We are extremely grateful for your ongoing support for Excellence and Opportunity at DCU. Thanks to this fund, we can support doctoral research opportunities for talented students and continue our mission to broaden participation in higher education.

Your gift is creating an open door for bright minds to excel. Support for DCU's Excellence and Opportunity Fund enables the inspiring stories of students such as those featured in this report.



Doctoral Research Opportunities

- **7** PhD students supported by our donors in 2023/24
- Support like yours enables research in cancer, sustainable finance, law, music and autism education



DCU Access Programme

- **1,100** students from low-income families supported in 2023/24
- Access students receive a post-entry package of financial, personal and academic supports to help them excel



University of Sanctuary Programme

- **6** University of Sanctuary students in 2023/24
- Students from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds receive fee-waivers and personal supports, funded by DCU, alongside a financial scholarship



Autism Friendly University

- **1st** Autism Friendly University in Ireland
- Launched in 2023, a new philanthropically funded Quiet Space supports students to recover from sensory overload and recharge on campus

"Thanks to the emotional and financial support available at DCU, I was able to make the right choice for me and finish my Physics degree... After my PhD, I'd like to stay in the renewable energy sector so I can continue to advance our understanding of the world and hopefully change people's lives for the better."

Rhys Doyle
PhD candidate and Access graduate



Caitlin's Story

Support from the DCU Access Programme helped Caitlin pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. Now, she wants to inspire other young people from her area to fulfil their potential.



"I grew up in a busy home in Ballymun, where I was the third youngest of seven. My dream was to be a teacher, ever since primary school. I knew that meant going to college, but it was only when my older brother started in DCU that I began to imagine myself in university.

"Seeing him go to college just down the road made me think that university was a real possibility for me. I used to pass DCU on the bus and think, I want to get off at this stop and go in."

In sixth year, our school had a visit from the DCU Access Outreach Programme, who spoke to us about university and how to apply. My parents never had the chance to finish secondary school, so it was always their ambition that we'd make it through school and get the Leaving Certificate. University was more than they ever hoped for. Although we're the first generation of the family to go to university, my brother's experience with the DCU Access Programme, and his belief in me, made me realise that I could do this.

The Access Programme got me into college. My twin sister and I started university the same year, so we were worried about the financial side of things. Without the SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) grant and the DCU Access Programme, we would have faced a lot more barriers.

The support we get from the Access Programme means a lot. It's incredible to have someone you can go to with any of your problems, and financial supports like the scholarship and lunch vouchers for the shop are really helpful.

I'm in my final year now, studying Religious Education and History, and I love the relationships you form with the students when you're on teaching placement. I think it's my own enjoyment of learning that makes me want to teach, because you're sharing that with your students. I hope that by August, I'll be working as a secondary school teacher in the same area I grew up in. I want to be a role model to other young people in Ballymun.

"When I was in school, none of our teachers sounded like me or came from areas like mine. I want the students I teach to see that college could be for them, and I hope that I can make school feel like a positive place to be."

Access has changed my life – and I hope I can pass that change on to other young people like me."

Supporting Transformative PhD Scholarships

We know that people from disadvantaged areas, who are already underrepresented in the higher education student population, become even more emphatically underrepresented when it comes to doctoral study. At doctoral level, Access graduates from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds accounted for just 0.6% of the PhD students enrolled at DCU in 2021/22. Our supporters are helping to change that by creating opportunities for more talented students to join our research community.

In 2023, Hannan Galeb was awarded DCU's first fully-funded Access PhD scholarship. Thanks to philanthropy, Hannan's research in sustainable finance is helping to shape a greener future.



“When my family moved to Dublin from Iraq, it opened up more opportunities for me in education, especially as a woman. I wanted to take advantage of that – because education is everything. Without this scholarship, I would not have had the financial support to do a PhD. This is a life-changing opportunity to do what I love and pursue a career in lecturing and research.”

Hannan Galeb, Susan and Harry Hartford
Access PhD Scholarship Recipient

Keep in Touch

We are extremely grateful for your continued support for Excellence and Opportunity at DCU. We love to hear from our supporters, so please get in touch with any questions or feedback by emailing edtrust@dcu.ie.

To update your contact details or preferences, please visit dcuedtrust.ie/contact/lets-keep-in-touch.

To discover the many other ways alumni can stay involved with DCU, from events and class reunions to guest lectures and student mentoring, visit dcu.ie/alumni.

Contact

DCU Educational Trust

Mac Cormac Building, Dublin City University, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, Ireland
E edtrust@dcu.ie T +353 1 7007211 W dcu.ie/trust

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