

DCU Excellence and Opportunity

Supporter Update 2025



Iontaobhas Oideachasúil
Educational Trust



We are extremely grateful for your ongoing support for Excellence and Opportunity at DCU. Through this fund, we are creating exciting opportunities for students to pursue research with real-world impact – and we’re advancing our mission to make higher education more inclusive.

As the inspiring stories in this report show, your support for DCU’s Excellence and Opportunity Fund plays a vital role in empowering students to reach their full potential, to the benefit of all.

			
Doctoral Research Opportunities	DCU Access Programme	University of Sanctuary Programme	Autism Friendly University
– 14 PhD students supported by our donors in 2024/25 – Support like yours enables research in cancer, sustainable finance, law, music and autism education	– 1000+ Access students enrolled in 2024/25 – Access students receive a post-entry package of financial, personal and academic supports to help them excel	– 8 University of Sanctuary students in 2024/25 – International protection applicants and students from refugee backgrounds receive fee-waivers, personal supports and a financial scholarship	– 1st Autism Friendly University in Ireland – A philanthropically funded Quiet Space on campus supports students to recharge and recover from sensory overload. Planning for a second space is now underway.

“I came into college from a DEIS school, but I still get to follow my dreams. The world is mine now because of the Access Programme. Everything that happens from here is because of that support and I’m eternally grateful for it.”

Heather Campbell,
Bachelor of Education



Adam's Story

Adam Daly is a PhD student in DCU School of Psychology whose research focuses on cancer survivorship, health and culture. Here, he shares how philanthropic initiatives have supported his educational journey, from school outreach to his doctoral scholarship.



"I think my mam always saw college as a way to have a better life. It was important to her that we get the best education we could and make the most of the opportunities available to us. It certainly hasn't always been easy, with cancer heavily affecting my family over the years – but now my siblings and I all have a college education.

I went to secondary school in St Vincent's, a DEIS school in Glasnevin, where I was lucky enough to take part in a lot of initiatives with the DCU Access Outreach Programme. Learning about those supports made college a real possibility for me. I applied to study Psychology in DCU because I wanted to help people and facilitate positive change.

During my undergraduate degree, I had incredible opportunities to participate in international research in culture and health psychology. I won four research grants, including from the Irish Cancer Society and Breakthrough Cancer, published three research papers, and I already have more research in the works.

My most recent study looks at tattoo artists' perspectives on therapeutic tattoos for cancer survivors, and the impact on them of doing this work. Many cancer treatments can lead to a disrupted body image and identity. There's a wide practice of therapeutic tattooing for cancer survivors, yet it's an under researched area.

"This year, I was awarded an Access PhD scholarship, which will help me to continue building a career researching cancer survivorship, health, and culture. It's an opportunity I could not have imagined myself having four years ago."

I've gotten an awful lot from DCU, and I wanted to give back, which is why I ran for the Students' Union and other campus positions. I think I'm most proud of establishing the Access fund, a pot of money set aside for Access students who would like to take part in Club and Society activities but can't afford to cover the costs. I also established a new social community for Access students coming to college.

"This has all only been possible because of the support that DCU and the Access Programme have given me."

DCU has been extremely welcoming to me and others from underprivileged areas. I really believe it's a place where anyone can succeed with enough ambition and hard work."



Ketsia's Story

An inspirational mother and a desire to help others inspired Ketsia Matondo to pursue a BSc in Health and Society at DCU. Here, she shares how the Access Programme has supported that journey.

"I was born in Galway, but I grew up in Blanchardstown as the middle child of four siblings. Although my parents are originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Dublin is where I've always felt rooted.

I have a strong bond with my mother, who works as a carer for the elderly. After moving to Ireland, she balanced part-time study with work, and that's something I truly admire. Thanks to her, going to college was something we always believed we could achieve.

I chose Health and Society at DCU to follow my passion for helping others. It keeps my options open for careers in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, or speech and language therapy. I'm truly

grateful for the support I've received through the Access Programme, from academic skills and mentorship to the financial scholarship, and I hope to pass on the encouragement I've received to others in my community.

"To the Access Programme supporters, I want to say thank you. Your support is allowing me to work toward a future where I can make a tangible difference in people's lives."

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

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