



DCU Alumni Giving: Supporter Update 2026



Iontaobhas Oideachasúil
Educational Trust

At DCU, the incredible support of our alumni community is making a real difference. Your generosity helps create opportunities for vital research and provides life-changing scholarships for students from under-represented backgrounds.

Every gift, large or small, supports a new generation of talented students to follow their dreams at DCU.

Doctoral Research Opportunities



- **17** PhD students supported by philanthropy in 2025/26
- Advancing research in areas such as health, the environment, music and education

DCU Access Programme



- **943** Access students enrolled in 2025/26
- Access students receive a post-entry package of financial, personal and academic supports to help them excel

University of Sanctuary



- **59** University of Sanctuary scholarships since 2016
- International protection applicants and students from refugee backgrounds receive fee-waivers, personal supports and a financial scholarship

Autism Friendly University



- **1st** Autism Friendly University in Ireland
- DCU offers sensory pods, designated quiet spaces and a toolkit of advice and resources for neurodivergent students

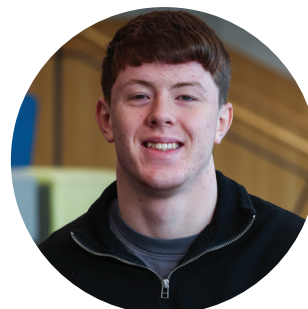
“Programmes like Access are important because they show that there is a place for everybody. No matter what you’ve been through, or where you are in life, there’s always the opportunity for you to study in college. My Access scholarship has really changed my life.”

Nathaniel Gyamfi
Aviation Management with Pilot Studies



Lee's Story

Lee is one of the 943 students supported by the DCU Access Programme this year. In this piece, he shares how Access is helping him pursue a teaching degree at DCU and share his love of Irish with the next generation.



"I live in Finglas with my ma and da and my little sister. My da has been out of work on disability, and my ma is his carer, so there wouldn't be a lot of money going around.

Although my parents never had the opportunity to go to college, education was really important to them. My ma sent us to our local Gaelscoil in Ballymun, because the language would be something she really cares about.

"When I was younger, I thought I might be an engineer – but it was when I started coaching jiu jitsu that I realised teaching was the career I really wanted."

I compete internationally in jiu jitsu and started coaching in our club. I really liked the connection you make with the kids, and I wanted that to be part of what I do every day.

I applied for the Bachelor of Education, and although I just missed out on a place by a few points, I was able to enter on reduced points through the Access Programme.

The support we get from the Access team is great – they were able to get me a laptop, and the scholarship means I can balance my training and coaching with my studies.

I met my closest friend in university during the early orientation for Access students, and that meant I had someone to talk to from the start.

"Through Access, I had the chance to mentor a group of secondary school students from my area who were interested in primary teaching."

I think it really helped for them to have someone who was coming from the same place to talk with them about the programme.

I enjoyed primary school a lot myself, so when I got to go back and do my first-year placement in Gaelscoil Bhaile Munna, it was a real full circle moment. After university, I want to have a career where I can make a difference in schools like my own and be part of bringing our language to the community."

Anne's Story

Anne Leung is a PhD student in DCU School of Biotechnology whose research focuses on tackling water pollution to protect our environment. Here, she shares how the support of the DCU Access Programme and her PhD Scholarship shaped her journey.



"My passion for the environment was one of the reasons I applied for the BA in Environmental Science and Technology in DCU. I applied through the Access Programme, and it was reassuring to have that extra support.

I'm the oldest of five, and the first in my family to go to university. When I graduated top of my undergraduate class, my mam phoned everyone in her village in China to tell them the news.

I have always loved biology, and during my bachelor's degree and a research internship at DCU, I developed a passion for tackling environmental challenges.

The Hartford Access PhD Scholarship has played a huge role in advancing my research. My project examines the water flea, or *Daphnia*, as a model system in ecotoxicology.

Pollutants from preservatives, pharmaceuticals, and even cosmetics end up in our water system. I'm exploring how the water flea reacts, because that has a knock-on effect for the entire ecosystem.

My first academic paper was published in *Water*, examining the impact of parabens on the water flea. Parabens are often found in our food, deodorant and cosmetics, so we wanted to work out what concentration levels would be harmful.

"Research like this underpins environmental regulations, and I'm really proud to be part of that."

Keep in Touch

We are extremely grateful for your continued support. 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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