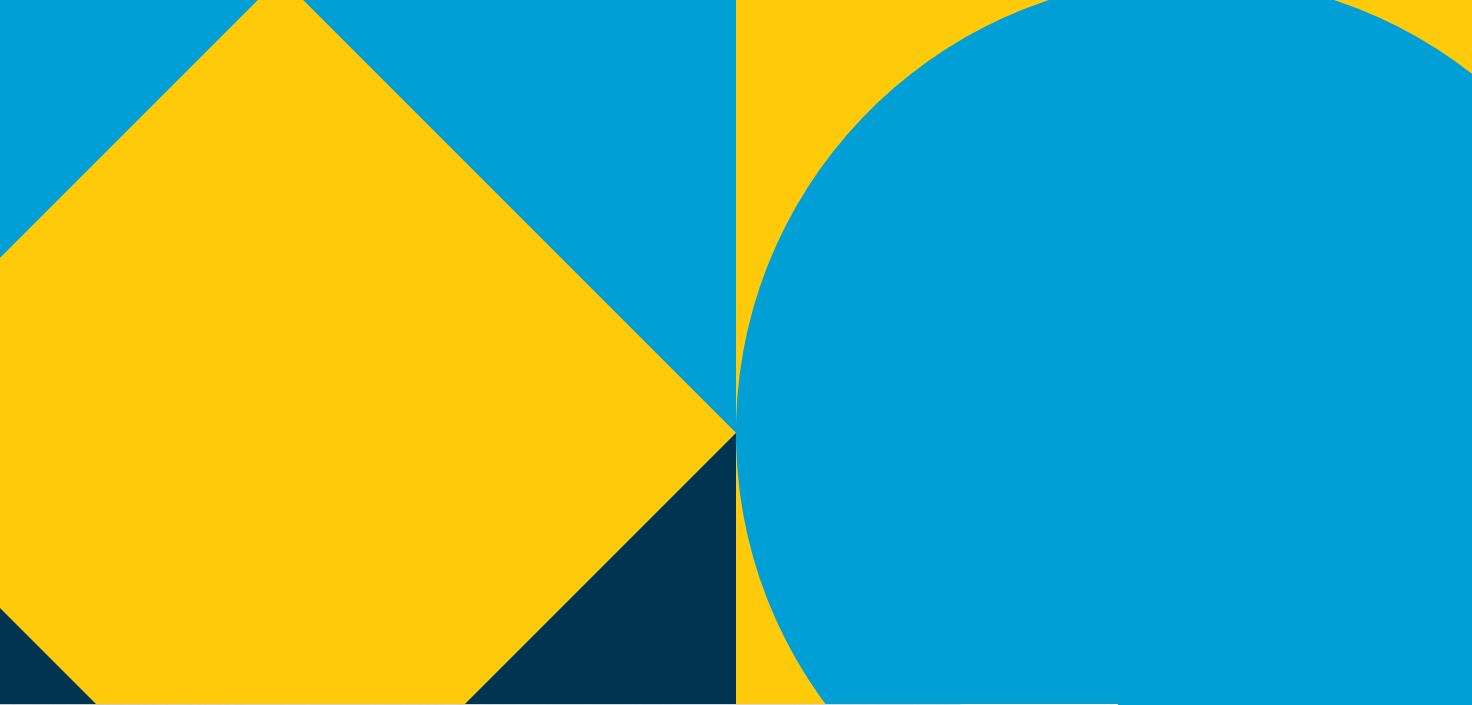




DCU Excellence and Opportunity: Supporter Update 2026



Iontaobhas Oideachasúil
Educational Trust

This year, supporters like you have created opportunities for talented students to pursue research with real-world impact and have helped students from all backgrounds to overcome the barriers and excel in university.

As the inspiring stories in this report show, your support is playing a vital role in empowering bright minds to reach their full potential in third level education and beyond.

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



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."

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. While learning about declining biodiversity, climate change, and the global burden of poor drinking water quality, I realised that water monitoring is an often-overlooked preventive measure.

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, cigarette products and even cosmetics end up in our water system – so we need to know what happens next. With the support of my supervisor Dr Konstantinos Gkrintzalis, I'm exploring how the water flea reacts to these pollutants, because whatever impact they have on the water flea 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.

Right now, I'm carrying out a similar study on the impacts of cigarette products in water, and we're writing a paper exploring the challenges of urban light pollution on aquatic life.

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

My parents are very supportive, but there is a disadvantage that comes with being a second-generation immigrant. I had to figure out a lot by myself, but I found the right people to ask along the way."

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.

It was when I started coaching jiu jitsu that I realised teaching was the career I wanted. I applied for the Bachelor of Education at DCU and was able to enter on reduced points through the Access Programme.

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.

"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."

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

DCU Educational Trust

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

 [@dcuedtrust.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/dcuedtrust.bsky.social)

 [dcuedtrust](https://facebook.com/dcuedtrust)

 [Dublin City University Educational Trust](https://www.linkedin.com/company/dublin-city-university-educational-trust)

DCU Educational Trust is a registered charity (CHY 8960) established in 1988 to advance the development of Dublin City University.

