



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity disAbility Services Annual Report 2023-2024

Trinity
disAbility Hub

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Executive Summary

Number of new disabled students UG entrants by entry route)	DARE Reduced Points: 263 DARE Merit: 52 HEAR: 11 Mature (Over 23): 19 Other new entrants: 377 Total: 722
Number of new disabled students - UG/PG/Foundation	UG: 569 PG: 147 Foundation: 6 Total: 722
Number of International disabled students (non-Irish)	Total: 316
Number of disabled students in Trinity	Total: 2560 (11.6 % of total Student population)
Number of needs assessments carried out	Total: 874
Number of students supported/funded by FSD student disability fund	Total: 2021
Number of students receiving exam accommodations	Total: 2310
Number of Assistive Technology assessments/appointments	Referrals: 140 Appointments: 99
Number of disabled students receiving Occupational Therapy supports/appointments	Students: 633 Appointments: 2242
Number of disabled students availing of Professional Placement support	208 (174 Trinity, 34 Marino)
Number of disabled students /parents supported pre-entry	Pre-entry events: 28 Prospective student enquiries: 221 Neurodiversity+ Pre-Orientation: 60
	General Induction: 104
Number of disabled students Engaging with the Ability Co-Op annually	Total: 15
Number of disabled students whose residential accommodations applications were supported	Total: 99
Number of school/departmental meetings	Total: 16
Number of disabled students supported by Educational Support Workers (ESW)	Total: 33
Number of disabled staff supported	Total: 10

Introduction and Service Structure

The Disability Service (DS) at Trinity College Dublin is dedicated to addressing the needs of disabled students, staff, and visitors. Their primary functions include providing support and accommodations, as well as advocating for policy and procedural changes to ensure compliance with relevant legislation such as the Disability Act 2005.

The Purpose of the DS is to champion the holistic development and success of disabled people by fostering an environment that prioritises accessibility, drives innovative practices, and cultivates a culture of inclusion, ensuring every disabled person has the opportunity to thrive within the University community and beyond.

Under our strategic plan titled "Empowering Students with Disabilities" (2020-2025), the DS aligns its priorities with Trinity College Dublin's overall mission, strategic themes, and priorities. Their plan emphasises innovation, civic engagement, and the involvement of the university community in creating an inclusive environment. By continuously reviewing service delivery, maximising partnerships, and employing innovative approaches, they aim to achieve their objectives and enhance the student experience.

Through the three C's co-production, co-creation and co-design approach, the DS collaborates with students, staff, and stakeholders to engage the university community and

foster innovation and inclusion. They collect and analyse data to inform evidence-based decision-making, improve support systems, and optimise the student journey. Every DS activity and objective is aligned with Trinity College Dublin's strategic objectives, national targets set by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Ireland, and their own strategic implementation plan.

Since its establishment in June 2000, the DS has experienced significant growth, with the number of students applying for support increasing from 64 in 2000-01 to 2560 in 2023-24. They have developed a comprehensive range of supports across all faculties to enable disabled students to pursue their degree programs.

Disability Service Highlights 2023-24

These highlights show the Disability Service's efforts to support disabled students, provide necessary accommodations, promote inclusivity, and enhance the student experience at Trinity College Dublin.

The **neurodiversity+ three-day** event during the Pre-Orientation was a standout success, with high demand and active student engagement, particularly during the table quiz, which effectively encouraged interaction among attendees.

Implementation of Pre-Assessment Exam Accommodations: The new system for distributing reasonable accommodations was fully implemented, ensuring that exam accommodations are recommended prior to the needs assessment meeting. This proactive approach allowed students to meet Semester 1 exam deadlines more effectively.

Accommodation Success and Process Improvement: 85% of disabled applicants seeking residential accommodation were successfully placed across campus and Trinity Hall for the 24/25 academic year. The introduction of a new scoring process provided a stronger and more transparent rationale for accommodation decisions, reducing the risk of bias.

Significant Financial Support for Disabled Students: Trinity Development and Alumni contributed €35,000 to the Disabled Student Accommodation Bursary, benefiting 19 students with approximately €2,000 each towards their accommodation costs. This support significantly alleviated financial pressures for both continuing and incoming students.

Growth in Supported Exam Accommodations: The number of students with exam accommodations noted in their LENS report increased to 2,295, reflecting continued growth in student requests for disability supports. Collaborative efforts with the assessment team led to improvements in exam environments, such as the increased use of low-distraction dividers.

Development of a New Epilepsy Protocol: A new epilepsy protocol was developed in collaboration with College Health to better support students experiencing seizures due to epilepsy, ensuring a more responsive and effective approach to their needs.

Digital Accessibility: The service successfully supported 10,780 individual students through Blackboard Ally, a tool that allows students to create accessible formats from materials uploaded to their Blackboard teaching modules. This widespread use demonstrates the significant impact of providing accessible academic resources through integrated technology solutions.

Significant Increase in Occupational Therapy Appointments: The number of Occupational Therapy student appointments rose significantly from 1,880 in 2022-23 to 2,242 in 2023-24, reflecting growing demand and the essential role of these services in supporting student wellbeing and success.

Expansion of ADHD Clinic: The ADHD Clinic was expanded as a joint initiative between the Disability Service and College Health, with 34 students engaging with the clinic in 2023-24. This expansion highlights the increasing recognition and support for students with ADHD.

Integration of Mental Health Social Worker: The recruitment and integration of a Mental Health Social Worker as a joint role across the Disability Service and College Health marks a

significant enhancement in the support structure available to students, addressing both mental health and disability-related needs.

Positive Impact of Occupational Therapy Services: According to the Occupational Therapy Feedback Survey for 2022-23, 82% of students reported that Occupational Therapy was a crucial factor in enabling them to engage in their student roles, and 78% indicated it helped them develop life skills beneficial for their college life or future careers. These results underscore the value and effectiveness of the Occupational Therapy services provided.

DS Processes Annual Review

Below are the DS objectives set for each Disability Service process with highlights and KPIs.

DS1 - Pre-Entry to First Year Experience

DS1 Objectives:

OB1: To provide clear information on DS supports to prospective students and their parents/guardians.

OB2: To provide an effective pre-orientation and orientation programme to new disabled entrants.

OB3: To assist the admissions office in the process of administering the DARE scheme at Trinity.

OB4: To assist prospective and new entrant international disabled students to understand and access supports.

DS1 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024
DS1	Pre-Entry to First Year Experience Activities	Number of undergraduate disabled new entrants	DARE reduced points: 263 DARE merit: 52 HEAR: 11 Mature: 19 Other new entrants: 377

			Total: 722
DS1	Pre-Entry to First Year Experience Activities	Number of postgraduate disabled new entrants	147
DS1	Pre-Entry to First Year Experience Activities	Number of attendees a student Pre-Orientation events	Neuro+ programme: 60 AHSS session: 85 STEM & HS session: 104
DS1	Pre-Entry to First Year Experience Activities	Number of attendees at parent Pre-Orientation webinar	56
DS1	Pre-Entry to First Year Experience Activities	Number of Pre-Entry enquiries	133

DS1 Highlights:

- Pre-Orientation events well attended with a high demand for the neurodiversity event.
- The table quiz worked well during both neurodiversity sessions, and this encouraged interaction among the students.
- There was a high number of requests for DS attendance at course orientation events.
- 154 students and 75 parents attended pre-orientation events.

DS1 Actions and improvements 24-25:

- Bad weather forced last minute change to indoor activity instead of outdoor scavenger hunt. Have a pre-planned back up indoor plan if organising another outdoor activity.
- Numerous competing demands in the month of September made this a difficult period to manage – Orientation, ESW supports set-up, administration of main office. Ensure clear plan is in place with preparation carried out prior to September.
- New EO to carry out comms tasks relating to pre-orientation during this period.
- Depending on numbers consider running more than two neurodiversity orientation events due to high demand in 23/24.
- Clearer communication is needed regarding exam deadlines and the exam approved and the exam approved LENS process.

DS2 - Disability Service Needs Assessment

DS2 Objectives:

OB1: Provide a comprehensive and timely assessment of the needs of all disabled students applying to DS for support.

OB2: Complete a LENS (Learning Educational Needs Summary) report for all students that accurately and clearly outlines their reasonable accommodations.

OB3: Disseminate LENS reports to Schools and relevant staff and ensure they are fully informed on how to process and implement supports.

DS2 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024
DS2	Trinity Admission and Disability Service Applications.	Number of disabled students in Trinity.	2560 (11.6 % of student population)
DS2	Disability Needs Assessment.	Number of needs assessments carried out.	874
DS2	Exam Accommodations	Number of students receiving exam accommodations.	
DS2	Professional Placement Supports	Number of students availing of Professional Placement support.	208
DS2	Trinity Residential Accommodation	Number of students whose residential accommodations applications were supported.	99
DS2	Disability Consultations	Number of Disability Consultations	37

DS2 Highlights:

- A new system of distributing students who apply for reasonable accommodations with the Service was fully implemented this academic year whereby exam accommodations are recommended prior to the needs assessment meeting to ensure students meet semester 1 exam deadlines.
- The Disability Service held a 'How to Apply for Trinity Accommodation' information session in Semester 2 for continuing students.

- 183 Additional Needs applications were assessed in Semester 2 for the 24/25 academic year.
- 85% of applicants (156 continuing students) looking for residential accommodation were accommodated across campus and Trinity Hall for 24/25. We trailed a new scoring process which proved to be much more efficient than scoring in previous years. It allowed for a stronger and more explicit rationale for why we score students the score they're given. This reduces the risk of bias when scoring applications. We also updated the website with guidelines to support students completing the Additional Needs form which has given us much richer, qualitative data on why students apply via Additional Needs.
- Trinity Development and Alumni supported the Disabled Student Accommodation Bursary this year by donating money (€35,000) to support disabled students in financial need with their accommodation costs. 19 students were awarded approximately €2000 each as a contribution towards their accommodation costs. Of the 19 awarded, 13 were continuing students and 6 were incoming students.
- The Disability Service managed 5 students who needed exam accommodations due to a temporary disability.
- The number of students with supported exam accommodations stated on their LENS report rose to 2295 from 2011 in 22/23 which is in line with the continued growth in student requested Disability supports. 1503 are using a smaller group venue with a variety of extra time accommodations. The service in close collaboration with eh assessment team in AR continue to look for opportunities to improve exam supports for students with disability for e.g. the increased use of low distraction divider's and the scheduling of student with exam support into the same single venue for all timetables exams.
- The Disability Service hosted the Maths Help room in An Meitheal for Semester 1 to provide an accessible location for students who need Maths support.
- Data was gathered on the number of non-standard reasonable accommodation requests last year in comparison to this year. We've looked into the types of requests made, the disability of the student requesting, the course the student is studying and whether the requests were approved/declined by Student Cases and

the Senior Lecturer. This data will help us inform how best to make similar requests going forward. It has also enabled us to think about creating a case study on the types of alternative assessment requests made to better inform Schools going forward on the assessment types that are typically approved by the Senior Lecturer.

- A new epilepsy protocol was developed between DS and College Health to best support students actively seizing as a result of an epilepsy diagnosis.
- The Outreach Disability Officer attended planning and information meetings with the Health Sciences faculty, School of Nursing, School of Clinical Speech and Language studies, School of Physiotherapy.
- A visual of the PLENS process was distributed to named placement persons for all professional courses.
- The DS website was updated with a visual of the PLENS process, detailed explanation of all accommodations with examples.
- Each individual accommodation of the PLENS on SITS has not been hyperlinked directly to the corresponding information on the website.

DS2 Actions and Improvements 24-25:

- A new PEEP (personalised emergency evacuation plan) process is being explored for 24/25.
- The Senior Disability Officer will take responsibility for sharing LENS' with the School when Disability Officers have completed needs assessments with students to ensure LENS' are shared correctly with Schools.
- Case studies to be created on the various non-standard reasonable accommodation request made this year, particularly for alternative assessments.
- An annual review of the qualitative data received by students in their applications to the Disability Service.
- SITS will update with a new tick box stating "needs assessment to be completed" so we can pull a list of all students who only engage with exam accommodations in the next academic year.
- Criteria to be completed and shared by the OT Manager and Social Worker so we can refer students as early as possible to the Social Worker for support.

- An accessibility checklist to be completed for 24/25 to ensure students with specific needs like mobility aid users are allocated to appropriate campus accommodation rooms.

DS3 – Inclusive Learning and Technology

DS3 Objectives:

OB1: Implement a full spectrum of inclusive digital learning tools.

OB2: Implement a full support route for students with a specific 1:1 need for academic supports where Student Learning Development cannot meet it.

OB3: Provide independent learning tools for students engaging with the service. Remove human supports within learning and working environments wherever possible.

OB4: Scaffold 'ready for work' skills, including the use of technology to enhance performance.

DS3 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024
DS3	Assistive Technology	Number of Assistive Technology Appointments	140
DS3	Assistive Technology	Number of Assistive technology referrals	99

DS3 Highlights:

- Increasing move to a low-cost base/ubiquitous provision for technology – students already own/use. Student are attending assistive technology meeting with personal owned access to dives such as tablet/mobile and laptop. The service has moved to the adaption of these personal devices to benefit the user via the academic task they require support in. Less reliance on the need for hardware.
- Continued usage uptake of the current 3 site licenses funded via the Disability Service – 62 users of Glean Notetaking software support support. 261 new

activations of [Texthelp read and write literacy software](#). These software package's provide valuable support for everyday academic tasks when the student requires and are fully supported via the Disability Office and online web information.

- The service continues to support Blackboard Ally an additional software license presently funded by Disability and provided by Blackboard with the VLE. The software allows students to create their required alternative format from material uploaded to their blackboard teaching modules. The software had 10,780 individual students access the service in this academic term providing access information in an accessible format.
- Reasonable accommodation support in providing 1:1 support and exam assistance in the use of voice recognition software for 26 students. This support entails the setting up of a tailored PC and the training and maintenance of such machines for each annual exam sitting.

DS3 Actions and improvements 23-24:

- From reviewing current referral patterns to this service an updated process to signpost students to freely available software and training will be introduced to the service for 24/25. This change is in response to high referral numbers and the requirement for the service to focus on complex student assistive technology requests that require individual funding, procurement, and training.
- The service will continue to monitor AI developments in this field and to introduce supports that are both practical, safe, and compliant with college policy. AI is rapidly transforming the landscape of assistive technology (AT), bringing about exciting possibilities for people with disabilities examples include AI-powered navigation systems that help users with physical limitations plan accessible routes and avoid obstacles in real time. AI-powered software can assist with daily tasks like reading and writing.
- Equipping staff with knowledge of assistive technology (AT) is crucial for creating an inclusive environment for everyone. Here is a breakdown of key elements for effective staff training in AT. Embedding further sessions based on their roles and interaction with students equips staff to identify situations where AT support might be needed.

DS4 – Occupational Therapy Supports

DS4 Objectives:

OB1: Deliver individualised occupation focused support to students who have the most significant barriers to engaging in their student role.

OB2: Provide an accessible and responsive service to meet students’ needs.

OB3: Deliver a professional, competent, and evidence-based occupational therapy approach to students.

OB4: Work collaboratively with other DS Staff, Students services, tutors, and academics in supporting students.

DS4 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024
DS4	Occupational Therapy Supports	Number of students receiving Occupational Therapy supports/appointments	633
DS4	Occupational Therapy Supports	Number of Occupational Therapy appointments per year	2242

DS4 Highlights:

- Increase in the number of Occupational Therapy student appointments from 1880 in 22-23 to 2242 in 23-24.
- Recruitment and Integration of Mental Health Social Worker as a joint role across the Disability Service and College Health
- The ADHD & Autism Groups were co-facilitated with neurodivergent students with 72 students attending at some point over the course of 23-24
- The Cookery 101 course continued this year with 15 students attending at some point across the 6 weeks.

- ADHD Clinic was expanded this year as a joint initiative between the Disability Service and College Health. 34 students engaged with the ADHD clinic in 23-24
- Occupational Therapy Feedback Survey 2022-23
- 82% of students reported that Occupational Therapy was ‘an important factor’ or ‘one of many factors’ in enabling them to engage in their student role.
- 78% of students reported that Occupational Therapy was ‘an important factor’ or ‘one of many factors’ in enabling them to develop life skills which may be useful in their future college life or career.

DS4 Actions and improvements 24-25:

- Review of the ADHD Clinic provision in response to increased student numbers
- Engagement with the Warden of Trinity Hall on further developing Disability Supports and Wellness Initiatives on-sites
- Implement remaining recommendations from March 2023 Thematic Review of Mental Health Supports in Trinity focusing upon efficient case management and documentation on shared student cases and meetings.
- Re-development of Trinity Student Occupational Performance Profile (Lombard, Nolan, Heron, 2022) and Unilink Self-Management Programme – summer 2024
- Review of cancellations and student engagement over 8 meetings with revisions to procedures for both.
- Redefinition of DS4 to ‘Mental Health and Wellbeing Support’ comprising of DS4.1 Occupational Therapy and DS4.2 Social Work

DS5 – Financial Procedures

DS5 Objectives:

OB1: Keep accurate and detailed records of all costs accrued by the disability service. This will involve monthly update to the financial info template of the 4 main accounts – General (0000000), FSD (9030346), Path 4 (9031926) and Student Spaces (9050642).

OB2: Monitor budget allocations to ensure there are no significant overspends in specific areas.

OB3: Create requisitions and receipt POs for any costs aligned to the disability service.

OB4: Respond to any financial queries from external stakeholders.

DS5 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024
DS5	Financial Procedures	PA services including travel costs	€66,211
DS5	Financial Procedures	ISL services costs	€38,512
DS5	Financial Procedures	Computer Hardware / Software / Consumables costs	€57,060
DS5	Financial Procedures	ESW Worker costs	€14,860

DS5 Highlights:

- Regular activity on the 4 main accounts, General, FSD, Student Spaces and Path 4 with the latter due to close at the end of June.
- Capex project finished within budget with small amount left that can be transferred to another DS account.
- Period of no DSOM overseeing finances was managed effectively from Dec 2023 to Feb 2024.
- Accounts stayed within budget and all issues relating to payments due during period of not DSOM were resolved.

DS5 Actions and improvements 23-24:

- Call off POs to be set up for 24-25 for all PA and ISL purchases.
- One template for each regular account that will track all spending, invoices, projected spends and current balance. This will be updated monthly by DSOM.
- Regular meetings with IWA to discuss if there is a system whereby, we can reduce the PA costs.
- See how many students require PA support for the 24-25 academic year and assess whether Access Health might be a more cost-effective option.
- Budget to be decided for 24-25 in July 2024 in conjunction with FP.

DS6 SITS & SID – DS Systems Development

DS6 Highlights

Student Information Desk (SID):

The use of IT services hosted SID enquiry management team continues to provide a clear tool for transparency in support provision and obtaining a 3D picture of the student use of the service. SID main objective is to provide a system for all Disability staff to record all student and staff engagement via email, phone, and face-to-face meetings. With the large numbers of students availing of this service having a robust system that provides usage of the service and a clear technical process of the sharing of this GDPR sensitive data allowing in imperative.

SITS – Disability Service:

SITS provides the starting point for the student to register for Disability support hosting of all Disability agreed LENS reports and student medical documentation. The system is now in its sixth year of use and allows the secure sharing of LENS reports to schools (to school-nominated Disability liaison officers) for redistribution via SITS module manager. Further work in this area in supporting schools is understanding the sharing of this information to required teaching/support staff within that school with specific sessions on the school's responsibilities in this area scheduled for August/September 2024.

- Via school engagement and feedback on the sharing of the LENS report in October 2023 the Disability instigated development work with Tribal, IT Services and Disability to allow a further level of LENS sharing to academic teaching staff via the assigned module co-ordinator. These changes were made live in May 2024 and are documented at <https://www.tcd.ie/disability/information-for-teaching-and-professional-staff/guidance-on-accessing-lens-in-sits/module-co-ordinator/>.

- Tribal UK advised during semester 23/24 that the current Student information desk software (SID) will be made end of life in summer 2025. Work began on sourcing additional funding which was granted via the Trinity strategic IT planning group for an upgraded Tribal tool – [Student Support and Wellbeing](#) . The main benefits of this tool allow for streamlining of the process for students to submit support requests through various channels (email, live chat, portal), tracks cases assigns them to appropriate personnel for resolution and provide a central record of student interactions with support services. Work will continue on the planning and needs requirement of this tool for planned implementation in semester 2 2025 (subject TCD IT project planning).

DS6 Actions and improvements 24-25:

- No formal SID / SITS process was previously created as end user manual acted as a guide. Agreed to review this for 24/25 to reflect change management for updates and development work.
- SID becoming out of life in summer 2025.

DS7 Outreach Supports – Marino / RIAM / The Lir

DS7 Objectives:

OB1: To provide professional disability support services to students that apply to the Disability Support Service at M.I.E & RIAM as outlined in the Service Level Agreements.

OB2: To ensure the Disability Service is accessible and inclusive for all students applying for support by providing a range of resources targeting various levels of need.

OB3: To work collaboratively with the access officers, student services, tutors, and academics in supporting disabled students in M.I.E., Lir, RIAM and Trinity

OB4: To develop and enhance the PLENS process for both staff and students by providing information through multiple modes of representation and communication e.g. website update, staff and student information, visual cues.

DS7 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024

DS7	Marino Disability Service, Lir, RIAM, Health Sciences	Total number of student applications for DS support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 135 students registered with MIE • 188 Trinity • 15 students registered with RIAM • 8 students registered with the Lir
DS7	Marino Disability Service, Lir, RIAM, Health Sciences	Number of new students applying for DS support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 students in Marino • 123 Lir, RIAM & Health Sciences
DS7	Marino Disability Service, Lir, RIAM, Health Sciences	Number of needs assessments carried out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 Needs Assessments in Marino • 125 Needs Assessments in Lir, RIAM and Health Sciences
DS7	Marino Disability Service, Lir, RIAM, Health Sciences	Number of LENS/PLENS reports produced	66 LENS 33 PLENS Marino 125 LENS 13 PLENS Health Sciences, Lir and RIAM
DS7	Marino Disability Service, Lir, RIAM, Health Sciences	Occupational Therapy referrals	45 Marino referrals X RIAM, Lir and Health Sciences referrals
DS7	Marino Disability Service, Lir, RIAM, Health Sciences	Assistive Technology Referrals	10 Marino Referrals X RIAM, Lir and Health Sciences referrals
DS7	Marino Disability Service, Lir, RIAM, Health Sciences	Academic Support Referrals	

DS7 Highlights:

- Pre-orientation event - 31 in total with parents and guardians attended.
- Students seeking support from the Disability Service this year used the newly created [MIE Booking Link](#) . This supported students in gaining autonomy of

appointments and minimised student concerns of timetable demands and attendance at lectures.

- 11 Students engaged in Pre-Placement meetings with the Placement Coordinator and a recurring monthly case management meeting was held for this.
- Students met with the Access Officer with any initial questions, queries or concerns regarding registration and engagement with the service. The Access Officer and Outreach Disability Officer liaised with consent of students to assure support from the initial point of entry was consistent, timely and not repetitive.
- 5 Case Management meetings were held with Student Counselling with student consent.
- 6 assistive technology Cpens were purchased for MIE students.
- A Non-Standard procedure and Learning Agreement was adapted for MIE.
- Participation in An Mheitheal working group has resulted in redesign of Placement Workshop for a more practical approach including role play and peer support.
- DS attended orientation for RIAM and allowed for accommodations of 'recording of recitals', 'use of enlarged monitors for sight reading' and 'accessible locations for lectures.
- The Outreach Disability Officer participated in the 7th Annual TCD Review at RIAM.

DS7 Actions and improvements 24-25:

- Development of the respite and sensory spaces in RIAM and MIE.
- OT Drop In to be developed along with Placement support groups to be incorporated as part of this support service
- Maestro will be updated following discussion with XinHao and Piotr to capture more robust data for the Academic Year 2024-25.
- Embed the Disability Officer booking link to MIE registration for 2024-25 to reduce steps involved in registration and overall time between completion of registration and attending a Needs Assessment.
- Strategic and operational meetings will be held monthly with MIE.
- A sensory and accessibility audit for RIAM will be supported by DS through audit tools and resources.

- The Creative Gym aims to feature as part of Culture Night, Neurodiversity Orientation on the 11th of September 2024 and for a four-week block for students completing supplemental exams.
- Through more detailed website information, more visual representation of the PLENS process and more frequent communications with school staff and students surrounding PLENS e.g. student and staff information workshops, drop in, embedded slides for pre-placement modules, it is hoped that students will feel confident in disclosing disability while on placement, identifying required accommodations and creating a PLENS with their Disability Officer well in advance of placement. It is hoped that through these developments, placement staff will feel confident to share, store and implement appropriate accommodations while students are on placement.
- A DS staff session will be held in August 2024 in advance of academic year 2024-25 to assure any necessary developments to this process are made as a team and that all staff are of a shared understanding of the PLENS process in advance of meeting students for the coming academic year.

DS8 Disability Service Funding Determination, Allocation and Reporting

DS8 Objectives:

OB1: Fulfil Higher Education Authority reporting requirements by due dates and to the quality required.

OB2: Provide well trained Educational Support Workers to meet the needs of the students.

OB3: Maintain detailed financial reports relating to the European Social Fund for Students with Disabilities.

OB4: Ensure payment of Educational Support Workers and casual staff through casual payroll.

OB5: Maintain service KPIs and Statistics that will form the basis for the DS annual report.

DS8 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024

DS8	Disability Service Funding Determination, Allocation and Reporting	Number of students supported/funded by FSD	2021
DS8	Disability Service Funding Determination, Allocation and Reporting	Number of new students supported/funded by FSD	598
DS8	Disability Service Funding Determination, Allocation and Reporting	Number of International students supported/funded	316
DS8	Disability Service Funding Determination, Allocation and Reporting	Number of Northern Irish students supported	27

DS8 Highlights:

- **Strengthened Collaborations:** Established strong communication and collaborative relationships with schools, tutors, and the Postgraduate Advisory Service, significantly enhancing the recruitment process for Educational Support Worker (ESW) roles.
- **Personal Assistance (PA) Services:** Successfully delivered tailored PA services to four students with physical disabilities, ensuring their academic and personal needs were met.
- **Irish Sign Language (ISL) Support:** Provided specialized ISL services to two students, enhancing their accessibility to academic content.
- **Targeted One-to-One Support:** Supported 25 students through individualized one-to-one ESW services, focusing on personalized academic assistance and mentorship.

DS8 Actions and Improvements 24-25:

- **Redesign of Tutor Support Recruitment:** Initiate a strategic overhaul of the recruitment process for Subject Specific Tutors, addressing identified challenges to improve efficiency and effectiveness in matching students with appropriate academic support.

- **Enhanced Quality Monitoring and Feedback:** Develop and implement a robust quality improvement and feedback system to continuously monitor and assess the performance and impact of ESWs, ensuring high standards of support delivery.
- **Review of PA Services Provision:** Conduct a comprehensive review of PA services, exploring the potential for these supports to be transitioned to the Health Service Executive (HSE) to align with best practices and optimize resource allocation.
- **Collaboration with IWA for PA Optimization:** If PA services continue, strategically engage with the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) during timetable planning to explore opportunities for PA sharing among students, maximizing the efficiency of support services.
- **Refinement of Reporting Structures:** Further develop and streamline reporting structures to ensure accurate tracking of ESW hours and interactions with students, enhancing accountability and resource management.

DS9 Quality Control and Improvements

DS9 Objectives:

OB1: Continuously monitor DS operating systems (DS module in SITS and SID) to ensure both are functioning accurately.

OB2: Sharpen communication with both internal and external stakeholders around the needs of students with disabilities.

OB3: Meet with all schools and departments annually to discuss disability-related issues i.e., teaching and assessment.

OB4: Engage with students with disabilities in a meaningful way through social media and other targeted comms.

DS9 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024
DS9	Disability Service Stakeholder Communication	Twitter Followers	1,567

DS9	Disability Service Stakeholder Communication	New Instagram Followers	1,176
DS9	Disability Service Stakeholder Communication	Number of E-newsletters sent to students	28
DS9	Disability Service Stakeholder Communication	Students employed by DS as content creators/producers	2

DS9 Highlights:

- **Effective Use of Resources:** Regularly conducted drop-in sessions and consistently utilised office spaces, including meeting rooms, to provide essential student support and host meetings effectively.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Implemented a new rota system to ensure the maintenance and security of office premises, enhancing the operational efficiency of the Disability Service.
- **Consistent Student Communication:** Successfully delivered a weekly DS providing students with timely and relevant information on available supports and upcoming events.
- **Engaged Social Media Presence:** Maintained an active and consistent social media presence on Twitter and Instagram, ensuring alignment of content across platforms and reinforcing communications delivered through the weekly newsletter.
- **Strategic Recruitment:** Successfully recruited a new Disability Service Office Manager (DSOM) and an Executive Officer (EO), strengthening the team's capacity to deliver administrative support services.

DS9 Actions and Improvements 24-25:

Proposal for DS9 to be split into 6 sub-sections under the overall category of Quality Control and Improvement:

DS9.1: General Administration – Manuals, Policies, SharePoint / Shifts and Drop-In Management, Meeting Management, Password Records, Sick Leave, Annual Leave.

DS9.2: Health and Safety – Printing House Square Premises / IProtectU / Emergency Contact List / Risk Register.

DS9.3: Communications – Website / Social Media / Weekly Newsletters.

DS9.4: Complaints – Formal Procedure and Database for Record Keeping.

DS9.5: Recruitment, Induction and Training – Recruitment and Interview Process / Induction Process / Internal Training / IProtectU / Training Records.

DS9.6: Process Reviews – Semester 1 and 2 Process Reviews / Annual Report / New Process.

New Objective Statements for DS9 Process:

OB1: Ensure Accessibility and Accuracy of Administrative Records: Maintain up-to-date and easily accessible records for all office administration tasks, ensuring efficient retrieval and management of information.

OB2: Optimize Shift Allocations and Scheduling: Regularly monitor and adjust shift allocations to ensure adequate space for one-to-one meetings and that drop-in sessions are scheduled at times that best meet the needs of students.

OB3: Maintain Health and Safety Standards: Conduct regular health and safety checks, along with daily and weekly maintenance of the PHS office premises, to ensure a safe and well-maintained working environment.

OB4: Enhance Student Engagement Through Effective Communication: Actively engage with students with disabilities through targeted social media and other communication channels, ensuring meaningful interactions and the dissemination of important information.

OB5: Implement and Monitor Complaints Management System: Log and track all complaints, both formal and informal, in the new complaints database, ensuring that staff responsible for handling complaints follow established procedures accurately.

OB6: Ensure Compliance with Recruitment and Training Procedures: Ensure that line managers adhere to correct recruitment processes and that all induction and training programs are completed and kept up to date.

OB7: Facilitate Process Reviews and Documentation: Organize and conduct regular process reviews and compile detailed process documentation for process leads to ensure clarity and consistency in operations.

The modifications to Process 9 will allow for:

- **Enhanced Communication Oversight:** Assign communication duties to the newly hired EO, with oversight provided by the DSOM, to ensure streamlined and effective student and stakeholder communication.
- **Implementation of Complaints Procedure:** Develop and implement a comprehensive complaints procedure and database for record-keeping, enhancing transparency and responsiveness in service delivery.
- **Stringent Process Review Implementation:** Establish and enforce a more rigorous process review schedule with clear timelines for 2024-25, ensuring continuous improvement in service processes and operations.
- **Staff Training Review and Completion:** Conduct a thorough review of incomplete staff training and ensure all necessary training is completed and updated in 2024-25, supporting professional development and service quality.

DS10 Staff with disabilities

DS10 Objectives

DS continues to provide disability needs assessments for staff with disabilities as per the [Trinity Code of Practice applying to the employment of staff with disabilities](#).

DS10 KPIs			
DS Code	DS Process	KPI Indicator	Year 2023-2024
DS10	Staff with disabilities	Number of staff with disabilities needs assessments	10
DS10	Staff with disabilities	Number of staff with disabilities disability support appointments	35

DS10 Highlights:

- **Development of Support Services for Disabled Staff:** The Staff with Disability Working Group convened three times throughout the year, focusing on the development and enhancement of support services tailored specifically for staff with disabilities.

- **Progress Towards Public Sector Quota:** In alignment with the upcoming increase in the public sector quota for disabled staff to 6% in 2024, Trinity College Dublin has been actively working to meet this target, demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusivity and diversity within its workforce.

DS 10 Actions and Improvements for 2024-25:

- **Expansion of Support Services for Disabled Staff:** Conduct a comprehensive review of existing support services for disabled staff, with the aim of identifying gaps and areas for improvement. This will include gathering feedback from staff members to ensure that the services provided are responsive to their needs and contribute to a more inclusive work environment.
- **Increase in Staff Engagement and Support:** Implement initiatives to encourage more disabled staff to seek support, ensuring that they are aware of and can easily access the services available to them. This may include enhanced communication strategies and outreach programs to better connect staff with the resources they need.
- **Introduction of SharePoint Document Sharing System:** Launch a new SharePoint-based document sharing system designed to facilitate better access to resources and information for disabled staff, enhancing their ability to engage with workplace tools and supports effectively.
- **Collaboration with EDI and HR to Meet Quota:** Strengthen collaboration between the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) office and Human Resources (HR) to ensure Trinity meets the 6% quota for disabled staff as set by the government. This will involve strategic recruitment efforts, support systems, and ongoing monitoring of progress towards this goal.
- **Continuous Improvement of Support Framework:** Establish a continuous improvement framework for the support of disabled staff, ensuring that the services evolve in line with staff needs and the broader goals of inclusivity and accessibility within the college. Regular assessments and updates to support mechanisms will be prioritized to maintain a high standard of care and inclusivity.

DS Operational Developments

The Disability Service aims to improve the quality of the service it provides through continuous review and operational development. Working towards its ambition to become the number one choice for disabled students in Ireland, in 2023-24 the Disability Service implemented organisational change in the areas of structure, information systems and processes.

Disability Services Structural Transformation:

In the past year, Trinity College Dublin's Disability Services have undergone a strategic realignment to better serve our disabled student community. Recognising the evolving needs of our students, we have restructured our services into four key pillars. These pillars—Disability Strategy, Vision, Quality & Direction; Administration, Data and Systems; Mental Health and Wellbeing Services; and Disability Support Management—are designed to ensure a holistic and effective approach to supporting our students. Below outlines these changes and their anticipated impact on our university.

Disability Strategy, Vision, Quality & Direction:

This pillar is the cornerstone of our efforts to lead on disability issues, both within Trinity College and on a national/international scale. By providing strategic advice to the Provost & leadership team and contributing to key committees, this pillar ensures that our policies and practices set the standard for inclusivity and accessibility.

Key Developments:

Strategic Leadership: Played a pivotal role in aligning the Disability Service's strategic plan with national and university-wide initiatives, ensuring that our objectives are met with precision and impact.

- **Policy Development:** Led the creation and refinement of inclusivity, disability, and accessibility policies, positioning Trinity College as a leader in these critical areas.

- **Project Sponsorship:** Sponsored and oversaw major Universal Access projects and student services initiatives, further embedding a culture of inclusivity across the university.
- **Outlook:** Moving forward, this pillar will continue to champion high standards in service delivery, ensuring that our operations are effective and aligned with the university's broader goals.

Administration, Data and Systems:

The backbone of our operational framework, this pillar is tasked with ensuring that our services are not only effective but also efficient and technologically sound. Through strategic management of our administrative functions, data, and systems, we have strengthened the foundation upon which our services operate.

Key Developments:

- **Operational Excellence:** Developed and implemented operational strategies that have enhanced service quality across the board.
- **Technology Integration:** Overseen the integration of advanced IT systems, improving our data governance and service delivery.
- **Financial and HR Management:** Streamlined our financial operations and human resources management, ensuring optimal resource allocation and efficiency.
- **Outlook:** As we look ahead, continued focus on data-driven decision-making and technological innovation will be key to sustaining and enhancing the quality of our services.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Services:

Recognising the critical importance of mental health and wellbeing, this pillar provides comprehensive support tailored specifically to the needs of disabled students. By leading a multidisciplinary team, we have ensured that our students receive the care and support necessary for their success at Trinity College.

Key Developments:

Strategic Oversight: Implemented new mental health and wellbeing programs that align with institutional goals and address the unique needs of our students.

- **Team Leadership:** Expanded our multidisciplinary team, including psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists, to deliver holistic support services.
- **Service Evaluation:** Developed and evaluated strategies that enhance the mental health and wellbeing of our students, ensuring that high standards of care are maintained.
- **Outlook:** The focus will remain on expanding these services and continuously refining our strategies to meet the evolving needs of our student body.

Disability Support Management:

This pillar ensures that the day-to-day operations of Disability Services run smoothly, efficiently, and in alignment with the broader strategic goals of Trinity College. Through effective management and strategic planning, we have optimised service delivery across all Trinity sites.

Key Developments:

- **Operational Management:** Managed service delivery across Trinity and associated colleges, ensuring consistency and quality through Service Level Agreements.
- **Strategic Planning:** Developed comprehensive strategic plans, including KPIs and annual action plans, to guide the service's operations and future direction.
- **Resource Optimization:** Maximized resource availability for disability appointments, ensuring that students receive timely and effective support.
- **Outlook:** With a solid foundation in place, we will continue to refine our operations, ensuring that our services are responsive, effective, and aligned with Trinity's mission of inclusivity.

Leadership Development and Cross-Pillar Collaboration:

As part of this organisational development, senior staff members within Disability Services are being empowered with leadership roles and delegated responsibilities to manage their respective pillars. This strategic empowerment is designed not only to foster ownership and accountability but also to encourage collaboration across all pillars. By working together,

staff are supporting the development of Disability Services as a cohesive and integrated unit, ensuring that all aspects of our service delivery are aligned and mutually reinforcing.

Key Developments:

- **Leadership Empowerment:** Staff have been given the responsibility to lead their specific pillars, fostering a sense of ownership and encouraging innovative approaches to service delivery.
- **Cross-Pillar Collaboration:** Initiatives have been introduced to promote collaboration across all pillars, ensuring that each aspect of the Disability Service supports and enhances the others.
- **Professional Development:** Ongoing training and professional development opportunities are provided to staff to equip them with the skills necessary for effective leadership and cross-functional collaboration.
- **Outlook:** This focus on leadership and collaboration is expected to drive continuous improvement in our services, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of disability support in higher education.

The restructuring of Trinity College Dublin's Disability Services marks a significant advancement in our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. Through the strategic focus of our four pillars, we are better equipped to meet the needs of our disabled students, ensuring that they receive the support necessary to thrive. As we move forward, these changes will position Trinity College Dublin as a leader in disability support, both nationally and internationally, reaffirming our dedication to excellence in service delivery and operational effectiveness.

Internal Audit of the Disability Service:

During the 2023-2024 academic year, an internal audit was conducted within Trinity College Dublin's Disability Services (DS) to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices and identify areas for improvement. The audit has provided valuable insights and outlines the key findings along with the steps being taken to enhance our services. The 2023-2024 internal audit of Disability Services has highlighted critical areas where our practices can be strengthened. By addressing these findings, we are committed to enhancing the quality, compliance, and effectiveness of our services.

DS Strategic Developments / Disability Service Projects:

Trinity Disability Service has several projects that are being developed in line with the Trinity Disability Service Strategic Plan 2020-25. These projects deliver on our priorities in the five years of our inclusive journey. Our staff and students, and our values are at the heart of our project plans, while our themes, innovation, and civic engagement, underpin everything we do. Project objectives will be achieved through innovative approaches and continuous review of service delivery while also maximising partnerships and joint working opportunities.

Trinity disAbility Internship Programme 2024

Introduction:

The Trinity disAbility Internship Programme, launched in 2022, represents a significant initiative by Trinity College Dublin to enhance inclusivity and accessibility within the university and a College target given to the Disability Service to achieve align with the HEA System Performance Framework 2023-2028. The program aims to bridge the gap between academic achievement and professional employment for disabled students, offering them valuable work experience and professional development opportunities to improve their employability.

Key Objectives:

- **Empowerment:** Provide disabled students with practical work experience, enhancing their professional skills, confidence, and self-efficacy.
- **Inclusive Workplace Profiles:** Develop detailed workplace profiles to ensure that employers are well-informed about the specific needs and accommodations required by disabled interns.
- **Employability Enhancement:** Equip students with essential career skills, such as resume building, interview preparation, and professional networking.

- **Inclusive Work Environment:** Foster an inclusive culture by implementing accessibility measures, conducting sensitivity training, and encouraging participation in employee resource groups.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Create connections between disabled students and professionals through mentorship programs and guest speaker sessions.
- **Evaluation and Recognition:** Conduct evaluations and recognize successful participation through certificates and other forms of acknowledgment.

Inclusive Internship Program 2024: Activity Report:

Key Statistics:

- **Job Applications Received:** 305
- **Interviews Conducted:** 102
- **Interns Hired:** 25 for the Inclusive Summer Internship, with an additional 5 hired for alternative roles identified during the interview process.
- **Participating Services:** 17, with 4 services hiring multiple interns.
- **Internship Durations:** Ranged from 8 weeks to 3 months, with bespoke durations offered to accommodate specific needs.
- **Internship Work Patterns:** 13 interns are working full-time, while 12 are working part-time.

Onboarding Objectives:

The program focused on developing comprehensive workplace profiles for both interns and employers, creating a structured needs assessment process through Workplace Passports, and conducting accessibility audits for all internship locations. Employer training was also a key component, ensuring that TCD staff were equipped to support the interns effectively.

Participating Services and Departments:

A wide range of departments participated in the program, from the Disability Service, Global Room, and Academic Registry to specialised areas like the Botany Department and the Trinity Access Programme (TAP). Notably, the program expanded to include new roles and

additional hires in several departments based on the exceptional performance of the candidates.

Internship Roles and Priorities:

Internship roles were diverse, covering areas such as accessibility audits, communications, administrative support, system development, and direct support to various university programs. Key projects included the development of the TCD Sense Map, social media strategy for the Disability Service, and the review and enhancement of the Careers Service website for accessibility.

Midway Feedback from Interns:

Feedback from interns has been generally positive, with high satisfaction levels regarding the support received both from the Disability Service and their respective workplaces. Key findings include:

- **Support in Relation to Disability:** Interns reported feeling well-supported, with average ratings of 4.7 for support from the Disability Service and 4.4 for support from their workplace.
- **Training and Onboarding:** While the onboarding process was rated positively (4.2), there is room for improvement in the training provided at internship locations, which received a lower average rating of 3.4.
- **Skills Development:** Interns reported gaining valuable skills, particularly in communication (4.3), self-advocacy (4.1), and career-related skills (4.2).

Disability Profiles:

The program also included a detailed review of disability profiles to ensure that the specific needs of each intern were met. This involved tailored supports and accommodations to facilitate a successful internship experience.

Trinity Development and Alumni funding:

In the 2024 fiscal year, the Trinity disAbility Internship Programme received crucial support from Trinity Development and Alumni (TDA), which provided €35,000 in funding. This

financial backing played a pivotal role in enhancing the program's capacity to deliver specialised support tailored to the unique needs of our disabled interns.

Key Areas Supported by TDA Funding:

- **Engagement of Disabled Graduate Leaders:** A significant portion of the funding was allocated to engage disabled graduate leaders who provided one-on-one mentorship, conducted specialized training workshops, and offered ongoing support to our interns. These leaders brought invaluable experience and insights, guiding interns through their professional development and helping them navigate the workplace with confidence.
- **Training and Workshop Resources:** The TDA funding facilitated the organization of essential training workshops that focused on critical skills for disabled individuals in the workplace, including self-advocacy, requesting reasonable accommodations, and building resilience. These workshops were instrumental in equipping our interns with the tools they needed to succeed.
- **Networking Events:** TDA's contribution also enabled the hosting of networking events that connected interns with disabled professionals and alumni. These events provided interns with the opportunity to expand their professional networks, share experiences, and explore potential career paths.

Outcomes Achieved Through TDA's Support:

- **Enhanced Support System:** The engagement of graduate leaders, made possible by TDA's funding, ensured that interns received comprehensive support throughout their internship experience. This support was critical in helping interns thrive in their roles and gain maximum value from the program.
- **Professional Networking:** The networking events funded by TDA were key in building a robust network of disabled professionals within the Trinity community. These connections will continue to benefit our interns as they progress in their careers.

- **Empowered Interns:** The training and mentorship provided under this program have empowered our interns, equipping them with the specialized skills and confidence needed to navigate the professional world effectively.

The funding provided by Trinity Development and Alumni (TDA) has been instrumental in the success of the Trinity disAbility Internship Programme for 2024. TDA's support not only enabled the delivery of specialised mentorship and training but also helped foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for our disabled interns. This investment reflects TDA's commitment to diversity and inclusion and has significantly contributed to the program's positive impact on the lives of our interns and the broader Trinity community.

Outcomes and Impact:

The program has been instrumental in increasing employability among disabled students at Trinity College, with participants gaining essential skills and confidence to pursue their career goals. The structured support provided by the program has also contributed to creating more inclusive and accessible work environments within the university. Feedback from interns has been overwhelmingly positive, indicating high levels of satisfaction with the support received from both the Disability Service and their respective workplaces.

Conclusion:

The Trinity disAbility Internship Programme is a cornerstone initiative that aligns with Trinity College Dublin's long-term strategic goals. By addressing critical employment barriers for disabled individuals, the program not only supports diversity and inclusion but also sets a benchmark for inclusive practices in higher education. The ongoing commitment to expanding this program reflects Trinity College's leadership in fostering an inclusive and accessible society.

disAbility Week 2023-24

Disability Week 2023-24 at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) was a vibrant and impactful series of events held from December 4th to 8th, showcasing the college's commitment to inclusivity and support for the disabled community. Organized by the Trinity Disability Hub in collaboration with various college bodies, the week featured a range of activities designed

to raise awareness, celebrate achievements, and provide valuable resources for students and staff with disabilities. This year's events emphasized the importance of accessibility, representation, and community engagement within the TCD environment.

Key Events and Highlights:

1. Senator Tom Clonan's Visit (December 7th, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM)

- **Location:** An Meitheal, Printing House Square
- **Description:** Independent Senator Tom Clonan addressed the TCD community, discussing his advocacy work for disability rights and the ongoing efforts to secure better support for people with disabilities in Ireland, particularly within higher education. The event also featured insights from Declan Treanor, Director of the disAbility Hub, on the current supports available for TCD students. A reception with tea, coffee, and sandwiches followed the discussion.

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2. ADHD Research Findings Presentation (December 7th, 2 PM - 4 PM)

- **Location:** An Meitheal, Printing House Square
- **Description:** Dr. Alison Doyle and Dr. Kieran Lewis presented findings from their research on ADHD in higher education, conducted in collaboration with Dr. Olive Healy from the School of Psychology. The session also covered the Trinity ADHD Clinic pathway and the student-led ADHD Support Group hosted by the disAbility Service. The event concluded with a panel discussion featuring students, staff, and representatives from ADHD Ireland.

3. Launch of TCD Sense Map

- **Description:** A significant highlight of Disability Week was the launch of the TCD Sense Map, an initiative led by Kieran Lewis and the TCD Sense interns. This map was thoughtfully designed to highlight various sensory-friendly spaces across the campus, from quiet areas for reflection to more vibrant social spots. The map reflects TCD's ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive environment for all students and staff.

4. disAbleD Student & Staff Art Exhibition (Postponed)

- **Description:** Originally scheduled for November 27th, this exhibition was postponed. In collaboration with The Ability Co-op and the TCD Student Union, the exhibition was set to showcase the creative talents of TCD's disabled students and staff. The event promised to be a powerful display of artistic expression, with a special opening by the Provost.

5. TCDSU Careers Information Event (November 30th, 11 AM - 1 PM)

- **Location:** An Meitheal, Printing House Square
- **Description:** Tailored specifically for students with disabilities, this careers event provided crucial information on their rights in the workplace and opportunities post-graduation. The event included a talk on legal rights as a disabled worker and featured Eithne Coleman, a senior occupational therapist from the Disability Hub, who discussed internships available at TCD for students with disabilities.

6. Lighting Up Trinity (December 3rd)

- **Description:** In recognition of International Disability Day, the front of TCD's iconic buildings overlooking College Green was illuminated in purple, the international color for disability. This symbolic gesture, spearheaded by the Provost, served as a powerful message of solidarity, understanding, and support for the disabled community.

Conclusion:

Disability Week 2023-24 was a significant milestone in TCD's ongoing efforts to foster an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of its community. The week's events not only highlighted the achievements and contributions of disabled students and staff but also underscored the importance of continuous advocacy and awareness-raising. Through these activities, TCD reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that every individual, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive and succeed within the college community.

TCD Sense

The TCD Sense project went from strength to strength through 2023-24 as the project nears its conclusion before the end of the year. The following is an update of the activities that were actioned throughout the academic year 2023-24:

- **Further Enhancements and Community Engagement:** Significant enhancements to the TCD Sense map were undertaken, accompanied by extensive community engagement with all student bodies to ensure widespread buy-in and effective communication of the map to incoming students. The Central Societies Committee (CSC) collaborated with a summer intern to ensure that as many society spaces as possible were included and made visible to students via the map.
- **User-Led Accessibility Audit:** A user-led audit focused on the physical and sensory accessibility of key college buildings, including accommodations, the Hamilton Building, and the Lloyd Building, was conducted to identify and address accessibility needs.
- **Training and Communication for S2S Mentors:** Training sessions were provided to S2S mentors to help them understand the purpose and functionality of the TCD Sense map. A comprehensive digital training guide and communication plan were also developed to support this initiative.

TCD Sense article accepted for Special Issue in the All-Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (AISHE-J) and the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP): Student Engagement and Partnership in Ireland. This article delved into the development of the TCD Sense strategy, a digital tool aimed at enhancing accessibility and sensory experiences across Trinity College Dublin's campus. The study highlighted the significant role of student engagement in the design and implementation process, demonstrating a partnership approach that aligns with the broader objectives of fostering inclusivity and responsiveness to student needs.

PATH 4 Phase 1 extension Final Report

The PATH 4 Phase 1 initiative at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) was designed to enhance inclusivity and accessibility across the university, particularly for students with intellectual disabilities (ID). This initiative was supported by a €213,000 budget, which funded four key work packages (WPs):

1. **Student Journey Mapping:** This work package focused on understanding and improving the inclusivity and accessibility of the student life experience at TCD. Activities included interviews with ID and neurodiverse students, audits of the university's physical and digital environments, and stakeholder workshops. These efforts led to immediate actions to address critical accessibility issues and the development of a feedback-driven framework for sustainable improvements.
2. **Review of the Certificate in Arts, Science, and Inclusive Applied Practice (ASIAP) Level 5:** The review aimed to evaluate and enhance the ASIAP program, with a view to developing a proposal for further work in Phase 2.
3. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Inclusive Module Development:** This package built upon the mapping exercise to develop inclusive modules that allow undergraduate students with intellectual disabilities to engage more fully with mainstream TCD students and courses.
4. **Accessible Learning Resources:** This work focused on creating curriculum materials based on UDL principles to enhance and reinforce learning for students in the TCPID course.

Key Achievements:

- **In-depth Inclusivity Mapping:** Comprehensive audits and student interviews led to the creation of inclusive resources, including TCD Sense's inclusive map and the incorporation of student stories to raise awareness.
- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Workshops facilitated dialogue between students, faculty, and staff, generating actionable solutions to identified accessibility barriers.
- **Development of UDL Resources:** A UDL toolkit and inclusive learning resources were developed, which will benefit not only ID students but the broader student population.

Challenges and Solutions :

- **Engagement Difficulties:** Initial challenges in engaging students were mitigated through increased outreach and flexible participation options.
- **Comprehensive Scope:** The broad scope of the project required an extension to ensure thorough mapping and the integration of feedback from diverse stakeholders.

Conclusion:

The project has laid a solid foundation for a more inclusive and accessible campus at TCD. The successful implementation of these initiatives positions the university to continue improving its support for students with intellectual disabilities, fostering a more inclusive higher education environment for all.

Supporting Disabled Staff

Collaborative Meetings with Key Stakeholders

In the past year, Trinity College Dublin has taken significant steps towards enhancing support for disabled staff through a series of strategic meetings involving key stakeholders. These discussions were crucial in realigning responsibilities and proposing a sustainable structure for disability inclusion within the institution.

1. Initial Stakeholder Meeting: Setting the Agenda

The first meeting convened representatives from the Disability Service, Human Resources (HR), and the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Office to discuss the current challenges and opportunities in supporting disabled staff. The primary agenda was to assess the existing support framework and explore how responsibilities could be better distributed to ensure sustainability and alignment with institutional priorities.

2. Strategic Planning Session: Agreement on Departmental Roles

The second meeting focused on defining the roles of each department in supporting disabled staff. After thorough discussions, it was agreed that the EDI Office would take on a strategic oversight role, developing policies and ensuring that disability support is integrated into the broader inclusivity agenda. HR would handle the operational aspects, including employment practices and accommodations. The Disability Service would continue to provide expertise where needed, particularly in complex cases requiring specialised knowledge.

3. Finalisation and Proposal Development: Planning Group Involvement

The third and final meeting resulted in a consensus on the need for a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position dedicated to supporting disabled staff. This role is envisioned to bridge the strategic and operational efforts, ensuring that all initiatives are coordinated effectively. The Planning Group was involved in this discussion, and HR was tasked with leading the proposal's development. The proposal will be presented to the relevant committees for approval and budget allocation.

Next Steps

As agreed, HR will bring this proposal forward, working closely with the Planning Group to secure the necessary resources. This initiative is expected to significantly enhance Trinity's ability to support disabled staff, ensuring a proactive and sustainable approach to inclusivity.

These collaborative efforts represent a pivotal shift in how Trinity College Dublin addresses the needs of its disabled staff, aligning with both best practices and legal obligations. The Disability Service will continue to play a crucial role in this evolving landscape, providing expertise and support as needed to ensure the successful implementation of these initiatives.

EDI Fund Initiatives

This year, several successful applications were made to the College's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Fund, aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment within

our community. Three notable initiatives supported by this fund include the Community Choir, Creative Gym, and Empowering Voices Workshops.

Community Choir:

The Community Choir, set to commence on 16th September, will meet every Monday evening in Regent House. This initiative aims to bring together students through the joy of singing, promoting social interaction and community spirit. An interest form will be circulated prior to the start to understand the needs of participants. The primary expenses include purchasing non-copyrighted music books and folders, with additional support from TAP for photocopying music. A key goal is to host public performances at the end of each semester, with the Christmas tree lighting proposed for Semester 1.

Creative Gym:

The Creative Gym is designed to offer DS students an accessible space for engaging in a variety of creative activities, beginning with a Culture Night event in August and continuing weekly from mid-September. Sessions will be held for a block of six weeks, with potential extension based on feedback and demand. The initiative will also be featured in the neurodiversity orientation on September 13th. The Creative Gym will provide both structured and unstructured activities, allowing students to explore their creativity individually or in groups. Funding will be used to purchase necessary materials, including paints, craft supplies, and other creative tools.

Empowering Voices Workshops:

The Empowering Voices Workshops will span the 2024/25 academic year, with six sessions scheduled between September and March. These workshops aim to support the transgender student community by providing resources, fostering social connections, and enhancing mental health outcomes. Each workshop will feature a presentation followed by a social support session. The workshops will be advertised widely, with specific details shared discreetly to ensure participant safety. Funding will primarily cover facilitator fees, with any remaining funds allocated for refreshments.

These initiatives exemplify our commitment to creating an inclusive campus environment, supported by targeted use of the EDI Fund to meet diverse student needs. We look forward to seeing the positive impact these programs will have on our community.

DAWN Examination Policy Review Initiative

Overview:

In 2023-2024, the Trinity Disability Research Hub undertook a pivotal role in leading the national review of the Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) examination guidelines. This initiative aimed to refine and standardise examination practices across Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities, have fair and accessible assessment opportunities. The review was structured around four key focus areas, each addressed by specialised working groups composed of experts, stakeholders, and participants from various HEIs. Additionally, a dedicated summer internship paid by DAWN was created to provide support for this initiative, bringing fresh perspectives and additional resources to the project during the critical summer period.

Focus Areas and Working Groups:

1. Formal College Examination Accommodations:

Objective:

- To standardise the accommodations provided during formal examinations across HEIs, ensuring consistency and fairness for all students requiring adjustments.

Activities:

- Conducted a comprehensive audit of existing examination accommodations across multiple HEIs to identify inconsistencies and best practices.
- Engaged with students, faculty, and disability support services to gather feedback on current examination practices and accommodations. Developed a standardised set of guidelines for formal examination accommodations, including extended time, alternative formats, and the provision of rest breaks.

- Addressed logistical challenges such as the availability of accessible examination rooms, the scheduling of exams to accommodate various needs, and the provision of trained personnel to support students during exams.

2. In-Course Credit-Bearing Assessments

Objective:

- To develop guidelines for assessments that are integral to credit-bearing coursework but not classified as formal exams, ensuring that these assessments are accessible and fair for all students.

Activities:

- Mapped the range of in-course assessments used across different disciplines and institutions to understand the diversity of assessment methods.
- Identified common barriers faced by students with disabilities in completing in-course assessments and proposed solutions to mitigate these challenges.
- Created a framework for the design and implementation of accessible in-course assessments, including the use of alternative assessment methods where appropriate.
- Promoted the integration of universal design principles in the creation of in-course assessments to benefit all students.

3. Assistive Technology and Logistics of Examinations

Objective:

- To explore and address the supports and logistical requirements necessary for the effective use of assistive technology during examinations.

Activities:

- Surveyed the availability and effectiveness of assistive technologies currently used in examinations, such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and specialised hardware.

- Collaborated with technology providers to identify emerging tools that could enhance accessibility in exam settings.
- Developed guidelines for the integration and support of assistive technologies in examination environments, including training for staff and students on their use.
- Addressed logistical considerations such as ensuring that assistive technologies are compatible with examination software and are available in sufficient quantities.

4. Professional Course Assessments

Objective:

- To customize accommodations and guidelines for professional courses, which often include clinical or practical components, ensuring that these assessments are accessible and equitable.

Activities:

- Engaged with professional course coordinators, accreditation bodies, and students to identify the unique challenges faced in professional assessments.
- Developed tailored guidelines for accommodations in professional assessments, considering the specific requirements of clinical, practical, and hands-on evaluations.
- Proposed modifications to assessment methods that maintain the integrity and rigor of professional courses while ensuring that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged.
- Facilitated discussions on the balance between professional standards and the need for reasonable accommodations, resulting in a set of guidelines that are both inclusive and compliant with professional accreditation requirements.

Summer Internship Contribution:

In addition to the structured working groups, a summer internship position was created specifically to support the DAWN Examination Policy Review Initiative during the summer of 2024. The intern played a crucial role in advancing the work across all four focus areas, contributing in the following ways:

- **Research and Data Analysis:** The intern conducted detailed research on existing examination practices and accommodations across various HEIs, helping to inform the standardization efforts. They also analysed data from stakeholder feedback, contributing to the development of the guidelines.
- **Documentation and Communication:** The intern assisted in the creation and dissemination of documentation related to the review process. This included drafting meeting notes, summarizing findings, and preparing communication materials for stakeholders.
- **Project Coordination:** By supporting the coordination of working group activities, the intern helped ensure that tasks were completed on time and that the project remained on track during the busy summer period.
- **Innovative Perspectives:** The intern brought fresh ideas and new perspectives to the working groups, particularly in the areas of assistive technology and universal design, contributing to more innovative and inclusive solutions.

Outcomes and Impact:

- **Standardisation of Practices:** The initiative successfully led to the development of standardized examination guidelines that can be adopted across HEIs, reducing disparities in how accommodations are provided and ensuring a more consistent experience for students with disabilities.
- **Enhanced Accessibility:** The focus on assistive technology and inclusive assessment design has significantly enhanced the accessibility of both formal exams and in-course assessments, benefiting a broader range of students.
- **Collaborative Approach:** The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including students, faculty, disability support professionals, and the summer intern, ensured that the guidelines developed are practical, effective, and widely accepted across the sector.
- **Professional Course Adaptations:** The customized guidelines for professional courses address the unique challenges of these programs, ensuring that students with disabilities can succeed in fields that require clinical or practical assessments.

Future Directions:

The DAWN Examination Policy Review Initiative has laid a strong foundation for ongoing collaboration and refinement of examination practices across Irish HEIs. Moving forward, the Trinity Disability Hub will continue to support the implementation of these guidelines and will monitor their impact, ensuring that they remain relevant and effective in meeting the needs of all students.

This initiative, bolstered by the contributions of the summer intern, represents a significant step towards a more inclusive and equitable higher education system, where all students, regardless of their abilities, can demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a fair and accessible manner.

Trinity PATH 4:

An extension of the PATH 4 project was sought and successfully granted, allowing continued progress on the four key strands funded through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and in collaboration with the Disability Service and the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID). This extension has enabled us to further our mission of fostering a more inclusive campus, particularly for students with intellectual disabilities (ID).

During this reporting period, significant advancements were made towards our objective of creating a supportive and accessible environment for all students, including those with intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges, through the Student Journey Mapping Exercise. This comprehensive exercise was designed to map out the various stages of the student experience, identify pain points, and explore opportunities for improvement. By focusing on the unique challenges faced by different student groups—such as navigating application processes, adapting to new environments, and managing academic and personal responsibilities—the exercise highlighted the critical need for tailored support services.

Key aspects of the Student Journey Mapping Exercise included the identification of essential support mechanisms, such as mentoring, academic assistance, mental health resources, and the provision of accessible facilities. The exercise also revealed opportunities to enhance the student journey, such as the provision of pre-arrival information, the development of peer support networks, and the inclusion of career guidance. Potential areas for development were also identified, including the expansion of mental health resources, increasing awareness of inclusivity, and ensuring that all campus facilities are fully accessible.

To support these efforts, student interns with disabilities were recruited to carry out several critical activities. These included conducting in-depth interviews with ID and neurodiverse students, auditing the university's physical, sensory, and digital environments, and facilitating stakeholder workshops that involved faculty, staff, and mainstream students. These collaborative efforts resulted in immediate actions to address key accessibility issues and the establishment of a feedback-driven framework aimed at fostering sustainable improvements.

In addition, the project led to the development of inclusive resources, such as the [TCD Sense's inclusive map & resources](#), [supporting off-books students](#), and added [disAbleD student stories](#) to raise awareness. The TCD Sense's inclusive map and other tools designed to support students, including those studying off-books. However, challenges were encountered, including managing overlaps between Work Package 1 (WP1) and Work Package 2 (WP2), engaging students in the mapping process, and addressing the comprehensive needs identified during the exercise. These challenges highlighted the necessity of the project's extension to ensure a thorough and effective implementation of inclusion strategies.

The continuation of the PATH 4 project underlines our ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, ensuring that the strategies developed are not only comprehensive but also sustainable and impactful in the long term.

Universal Access Projects

Our commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive campus continues through the advancement of several key Universal Access Strategic Projects. This year, significant progress was made, particularly in the pre-planning stages of major accessibility improvements to the Provost's House and House 6. These projects are integral to our long-term strategy of ensuring that all campus facilities are accessible to everyone, regardless of their physical abilities.

Additionally, planning approval was successfully obtained for the installation of a lift in the Junior Common Room (JCR) at the Hamilton Building. This crucial development will make

the entire building fully accessible, significantly enhancing the student experience and ensuring that all students can fully participate in campus life. These projects underscore our ongoing dedication to removing barriers and fostering an environment where every member of our community can thrive.

User-Led Physical and Sensory Audits Initiative

Overview:

In 2023-24, the disAbility Hub embarked on a transformative initiative to enhance campus inclusivity through User-Led Physical and Sensory Audits. This initiative, a key part of our ongoing commitment to accessibility, was spearheaded by disabled student interns who leveraged their lived experiences to provide critical insights into the accessibility of various campus facilities. The goal was to identify and address physical and sensory barriers that might be overlooked in traditional audits, ensuring that the campus environment is welcoming and accessible to all.

Development of the Audit Tool:

A crucial element of this initiative was the creation and refinement of the User-Led Accessibility Audit Tool (ULAA-Tool). This tool was specifically developed to empower disabled students, to conduct comprehensive and detailed accessibility audits across the campus.

1. Initial Concept and Design:

- The ULAA-Tool was initially designed to assess student accommodations, focusing on compliance with accessibility standards and the lived experiences of students. The tool was built to be user-friendly, allowing disabled student interns to document and assess both physical and sensory aspects of accessibility efficiently.
- The design was informed by universal design principles and key legislative guidelines, including the Government of Ireland's Building Regulations and the Autism Friendly University Design Guide. These frameworks ensured that the tool was both robust and comprehensive in its assessments.

2. Evolution to a Modular Design:

- As the scope of the audits expanded from residential accommodations to include academic buildings such as the Lloyd, Hamilton, Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute (TBSI), and St. James's Hospital buildings, the ULAA-Tool evolved into a modular design.
- This modular approach allowed the tool to adapt dynamically to different environments, such as lecture halls, laboratories, and social spaces. The tool was divided into standard units (e.g., entrances, pathways) and modular units (e.g., WCs, teaching spaces) that could be added or removed based on the specific needs of the building being audited.

3. Advanced Features and Functionality:

- The ULAA-Tool included several advanced features, such as a progress tracker, detailed comment sections, and the ability to attach photographs for visual documentation of issues. These features enhanced the thoroughness of the audits.
- The tool moved beyond a binary compliance model by introducing a tiered system of compliance. This system allowed auditors to indicate the degree of compliance and the amount of work required to meet accessibility standards, helping prioritize recommendations effectively.

4. Testing, Refinement, and Implementation:

- The tool was rigorously tested by disabled student interns and other users, including those with no prior experience in accessibility auditing. Feedback from these tests was used to refine the tool, making it more intuitive and effective.
- The final version of the ULAA-Tool was implemented across major campus buildings, enabling a comprehensive and systematic approach to accessibility auditing. The tool proved to be both functional and accessible, meeting the needs of a diverse range of users.

Implementation and Methodology:

The audits began with a focus on residential accommodations and expanded to include key academic buildings such as the Lloyd, Hamilton, Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute (TBSI),

and St. James's Hospital buildings. The process was designed to be comprehensive, with audits conducted over several months, allowing for a thorough examination of each facility.

1. Residential Accommodations:

- The audits initially targeted student housing to ensure that living spaces were compliant with accessibility standards and conducive to the needs of disabled students.
- The audit team evaluated features such as room layouts, bathroom accessibility, and common areas, identifying both physical barriers and sensory challenges, such as noise levels and lighting conditions.

2. Expansion to Academic Buildings:

- After completing the residential audits, the initiative extended to academic buildings, which presented more complex environments with diverse accessibility needs.
- Buildings such as Lloyd, Hamilton, TBSI, and James' buildings were assessed for accessibility issues related to entrances, pathways, lecture halls, laboratories, and common areas.
- The team employed a modular audit tool, which allowed for a flexible and tailored approach to each building's unique structure and usage patterns.

3. Data Collection and Reporting:

- The audit tool used was designed to capture a broad range of data, from binary compliance checks to detailed narrative observations. This included photographic documentation to illustrate specific issues.
- The tool's modular design facilitated the inclusion of both standard units (common features like entrances and pathways) and modular units (specific areas like laboratories or WCs), enabling a thorough and nuanced audit process.
- The audit reports produced were comprehensive, highlighting specific barriers and providing actionable recommendations for improvements.

Key Findings and Outcomes:

The audits revealed numerous accessibility challenges that traditional audits often miss, particularly in the sensory aspects of the campus environment. These included:

- **Physical Barriers:** Issues such as narrow doorways, inadequate ramp access, and poorly placed signage were common across many buildings. These barriers were particularly pronounced in older buildings, where retrofitting for accessibility had not been fully implemented.
- **Sensory Barriers:** The audits identified areas where sensory overload, such as excessive noise or harsh lighting, could negatively impact students, particularly those with sensory processing disorders. These insights were crucial in recognizing that accessibility extends beyond physical access to include sensory comfort.
- **Immediate Actions and Long-Term Planning:** The findings from these audits have already begun to inform policy changes and physical modifications across the campus. In several cases, immediate actions were taken to address critical accessibility issues, such as adjusting lighting or improving signage. The detailed recommendations are also being incorporated into long-term planning by the campus facilities management team, ensuring that future developments and renovations prioritize accessibility.

Strategic Impact:

The User-Led Physical and Sensory Audits have had a profound impact on how accessibility is approached at Trinity College Dublin. By involving disabled students directly in the audit process, the initiative ensured that the evaluations were deeply informed by the lived experiences of those most affected by accessibility barriers.

- **Empowerment and Inclusion:** The involvement of disabled students in conducting these audits not only provided valuable insights but also empowered the students by giving them a direct role in shaping their environment.

- **Informed Policy Development:** The actionable data collected through these audits has provided a solid foundation for policy development and facility upgrades, ensuring that accessibility is a core consideration in campus planning.
- **Enhanced Awareness:** The initiative has raised awareness across the university about the importance of considering both physical and sensory aspects of accessibility, leading to a more holistic approach to creating an inclusive campus.

Next Steps: Funding and Implementation of a Capital Project:

Building on the success of the 2023-24 audits, the next strategic step is the funding and implementation of a comprehensive Capital Project to address all identified accessibility challenges. This project will be crucial in transforming the audit findings into tangible improvements across the campus. The Capital Project will involve:

- **Securing Funding:** Efforts are already underway to secure the necessary funding to support the wide-ranging renovations and modifications required to meet the accessibility standards identified through the audits.
- **Implementation of Modifications:** The project will prioritize the most critical accessibility issues, focusing initially on those areas that have the most significant impact on students and staff with disabilities. This will include structural changes, enhanced sensory environments, and the installation of assistive technologies where needed.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:** As the modifications are implemented, continuous monitoring and evaluation will ensure that the changes effectively meet the needs of the disabled community and that any new issues are promptly addressed.

Conclusion:

The User-Led Physical and Sensory Audits have laid a robust foundation for ongoing accessibility improvements at Trinity College Dublin. With the planned Capital Project, the college is poised to make significant strides in creating a truly inclusive campus that meets both the physical and sensory needs of all its members. This initiative not only addresses immediate concerns but also sets a precedent for future inclusivity efforts, ensuring that

Trinity continues to lead in providing a welcoming and accessible environment for everyone.