

Student Counselling Student Learning Development & Student 2 Student Services

2S2
Student
Supporter

Annual Report 2023-24

1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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Director's Foreword

Student Counselling Services - Student Learning Development (SLD), Student 2 Student (S2S), Counselling and Admin team - works as a unit to provide a holistic model of care for students. This year our students have continued to struggle with financial difficulties, lack of accommodation, wars, and the climate crisis – impacting everyone, but having a significant impact on those with mental health difficulties. Our aim is to provide early, varied and appropriate interventions so that we can help students improve and maintain their mental health, and experience success in College. The peak usage of counselling supports seen right after Covid levelled off to just above pre-Covid levels (11.5% of the student body). Trinity students continue to use the service in a manner that demonstrates a high level of need in the community.

This year saw the achievement of the long-held strategic aim of gaining international accreditation for the service. This **IACS accreditation** establishes TCD SCS as the first student counselling service in Europe to achieve this certificate of excellence. We were supported in this by all our colleagues in Student Services and across the campus. Our aim is to continue meeting student needs while maintain this standard across all the services we provide.



This year we launched a new graphic - the 'Wheel of Services' provided by SCS – as a more accessible way for students to understand the range of services on offer, and to emphasise the many means of accessing quick and varied supports. The development of the Student Advisory Board is key to keeping us on track to keep our delivery of services relevant and meaningful to the student body.



SLD continued to provide excellent academic support through the Academic Writing Centre, workshops, and 1-to-1 sessions. The service (2.4 FTE) contributes to the Academic Integrity Steering Group, PG Renewal, while supporting a sizable proportion of our student cohort. Total service attendance for the year topped 5,000. Students originating from outside of Ireland attended over 60% of SLD appointments.

Thanks to TDA support, S2S relaunched its flagship Peer Support Programme with 18 incoming volunteers. They also introduced a new model for Mentor training which forefronts experienced volunteers as trainers, keeping student leadership at the heart of its mission and service delivery.

Trish Murphy, Director



Mission

Support through collaboration, connection and compassion.



Vision

To be an internationally accredited service, delivering accessible social, academic, mental health and emotional wellbeing services across the Trinity community, keeping students at the centre of everything we do.

In 2023-24:



14,756 appointments were provided by the **Counselling Team**



3,765 first-year and visiting students received **S2S** mentoring



5,011 attendances were recorded at **SLD** services

Student 2 Student (S2S)

S2S mentoring provides social and transitional support for all incoming first year students. S2S Peer Support offers 1:1 listening and support on request to any Trinity student.



In 2023-24, S2S maintained its delivery of in-person orientation, including campus tours and library tours, to nearly 3,800 incoming students. Due to the continued staggered start of Freshers, these sessions took place in the evening over the course of Freshers' Week.

S2S terminated its provision of mentoring to Erasmus/Visiting students due to a lack of opt-ins for Visiting/Erasmus student orientation last year, combined with insufficient Mentor numbers to meet the increasing number of visiting students. This enabled a much better Mentor-to-Mentee ratio across the full-degree programmes, and allowed S2S to expand provisions to the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities. 2 Mentors were recruited and trained from the Certificate in Arts, Science and Applied Inclusive Practice course for the first time in Spring 2024. S2S also recruited and trained 4 Mentors for Human Nutrition and Dietetics for the first time in 2024.

Thanks to the generous support of Trinity Development & Alumni (TDA), S2S redesigned its in-person training, with experienced volunteers delivering 40 training sessions from February – May in paid roles as Mentor trainers. S2S were also able to expand the Peer Support programme, training 18 new volunteers alongside the SU and JCR sabbatical officers in May, bringing the total number of Peer Supporters available for 2024-25 up to 23.

The House 47 Space was developed to include online booking for the Zoom Room (private room for online appointments) and the 1:1 Room, as well as online booking for the main space and for staff supervision/debrief.

S2S also redeveloped its annual Mentor and Mentee surveys, using an adapted version of the Student Success Measure developed and validated during the 3SET project. Key outcome areas are illustrated on pages 6 and 7.

Finally, S2S worked with the SCS Strategic Development Manager to reboot the Student Advisory Board at a service level, including developing a joint student-staff training model and partnership agreement for 2024-25.

S2S Service Levels

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
No. First Years Mentored	4,322	4,126	4,750	3,950	3,765
No. Volunteer Mentors	682	619	546	567	567
No. of Peer Supporters	25	12	0	12	23
Total S2S Volunteers	707	631	546	579	582
No. of Peer Supporter – Peer mtgs attended	89	N/A	N/A	N/A	123

S2S Highlights

- TDA funding support for S2S Peer Support and Mentor Training.
- Halted International/Visiting Mentoring.
- Recruited and trained the first TCPID Mentors.
- Recruited and trained first Human Nutrition & Dietetics students.
- Redesigned Mentor training to be student-led.
- Expanded the Peer Support programme from 12 to 23 volunteers.
- Introduced online booking for staff and student spaces in House 47.
- Implemented the 3Set Measure for Student Success in our annual surveys.

The annual S2S Awards Ceremony with Provost, Prof. Linda Doyle presenting.



Margarita Baturova - Spirit of S2S Award.



Honey Morris - S2S Volunteer of the Year Award.



Vincent Mgbemena - S2S Peer Supporter of the Year Award.

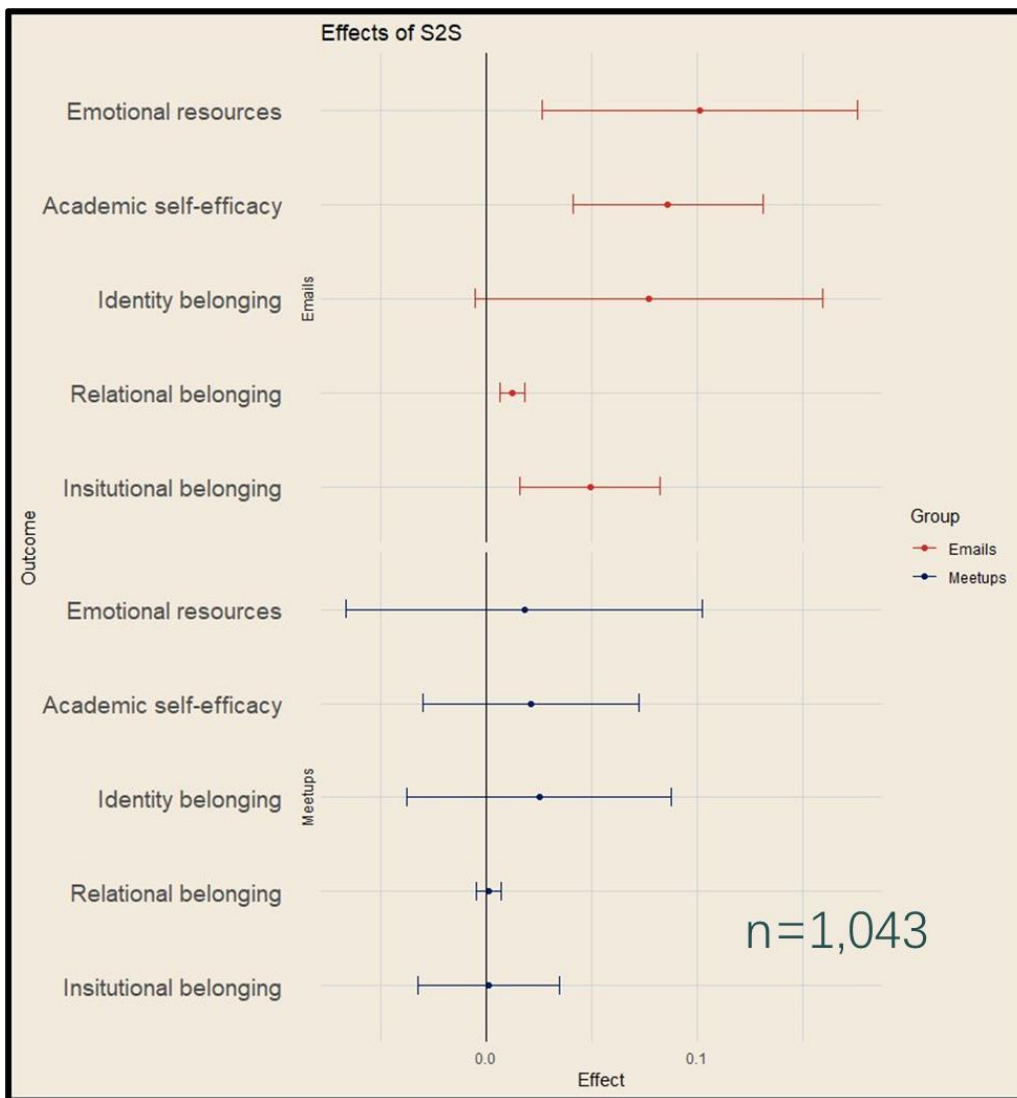


Alison Zobenko – S2S Head Mentor of the Year Award.

S2S Student Feedback

Effects of S2S on Freshers: Mentee Survey responses, 2023-24

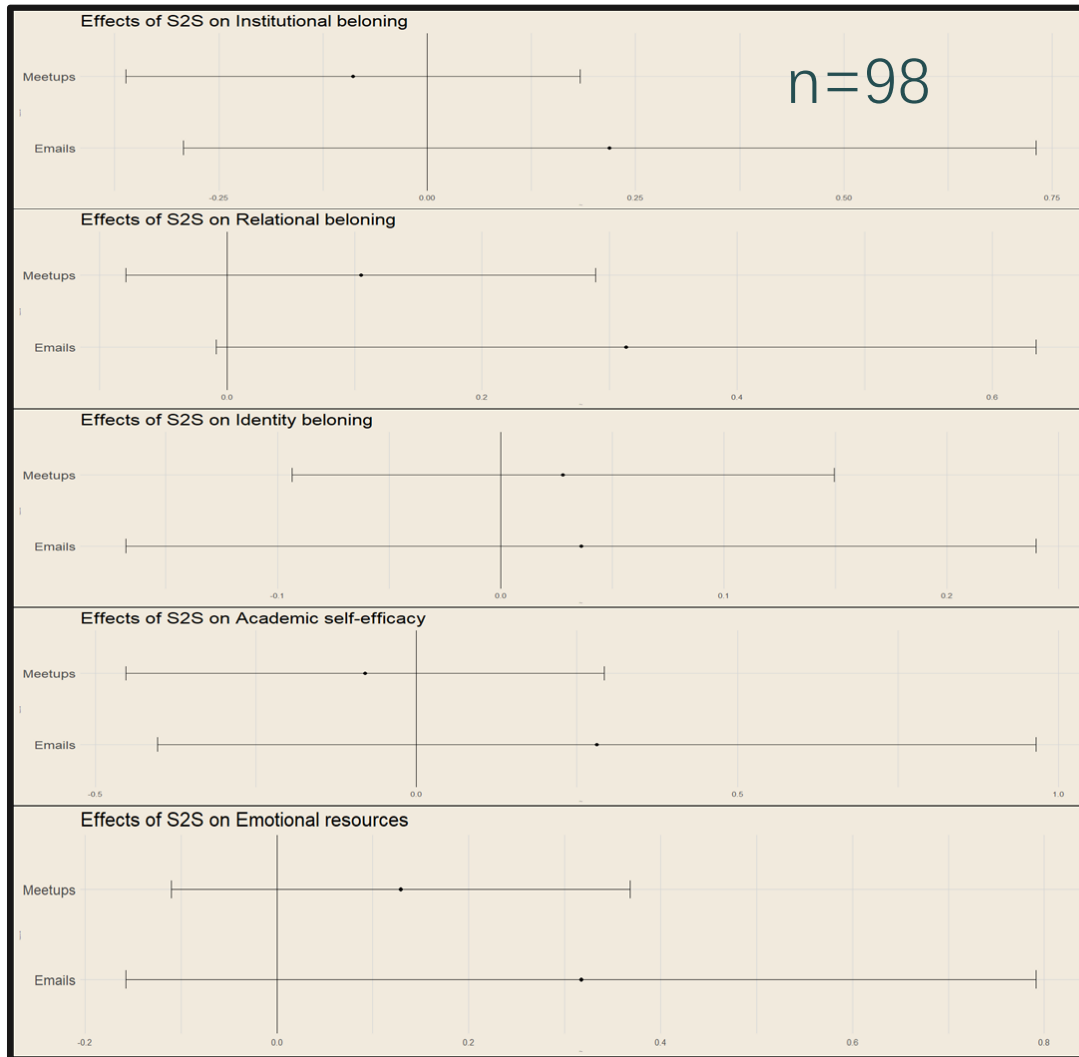
A key output of the 3SET project was creating and validating measures of students' emotional resources, academic self-efficacy, and sense of belonging across 3 areas. Over 1,000 Freshers completed the survey this year. Results below show a strong positive impact of Mentor emails on emotional resources, self-efficacy and identity belonging, and positive effects on relational and institutional belonging. Mentor meetups had a positive impact on emotional resources, self-efficacy and identity belonging.



The red and blue dots indicate average impact, the bars show standard deviations. Effects over 0 are positive. The confidence interval for all statistics is 95%.

Effects on Mentor Volunteers: Mentor Survey responses, 2023-24

To evaluate the impact of volunteering on the 3SET domains, regression analysis was done on nearly 100 mentor responses. Scores over 0 show a positive impact for volunteers on nearly all domains, except where meetups were mildly associated with lower institutional belonging and academic self-efficacy. While a small impact, this is understandable as meetups require volunteers to take time out from studies and from their usual social schedules.



S2S Qualitative Feedback Comments

1st Year Undergraduates

"I really enjoyed getting the opportunity to meet new people in the first week and I enjoyed having the craic with the s2s mentors who were super lovely, kind and helpful!"

"I liked how easy the S2S made things seem They made us feel welcome and showed us around."

"The mentors were especially good at getting us started talking, used really encouraging prompts that we actually wanted to talk about. liked having a little tour. gave actually good advice for tips and tricks to get through college."

"I liked how relaxed the S2S sessions were and how real and down-to-earth the mentors were."

"I felt like the sense of community fostered by the program helped me feel more connected and supported throughout my college journey."

"I liked the fact that we could ask older students in our course in-depth questions and get answers informed by their personal experiences"

"I liked receiving the really helpful emails, also the meet-ups and snacks organised by the mentors, particularly the information session close to the exams."

"My mentors specifically made us playlists for every email which was really fun for me and my S2S friends to look over and listen to together."

"I liked when in the S2S we got to talk about ourselves and got to know people in our group , as many of my friends in the present moment I met them through the S2S programme."

Mentor Volunteers

"I benefited a lot from the training, especially the conflict resolution and active listening exercises. I also enjoyed organising events for my mentees and getting to know them."

"I enjoyed the opportunity to share different tips and experiences I've learned in my time here with others, and I love being able to help students settle in to college!"

"I liked the sense of community and really loved having the support of the head mentors as they really helped me when I had difficulty with my s2s buddy and made me feel welcome in the society".

"I've been involved in many student societies but the S2S programme was by far the most accepting, comforting and enjoyable!"

"Starting off as a mentor then a head mentor and now a mentor trainer, I have only gone on to build more meaningful connections every year. Be it a coffee after class, a shoulder to cry on, a person to share notes with or someone to check me when I'm out of line, S2S has given me a group of people that have never turned me away, accepted me for all my flaws and imperfections and only work with me to make me better."

"I would not be in TCD if it was not for S2S. I debated leaving and giving up how hard I worked to get into this school. But it was because of how easily and whole heartedly I was able to get involved that I felt confident enough to live and thrive and study abroad."

S2S Plans for 2024-25

- Redesign House 47 as a fully adaptable and accessible space.
- Redevelop S2S volunteer resources to be fully accessible.
- Host all training and support resources online under a creative commons license and promote nationally.
- Secure S2S Executive Officer role.
- Integrate S2S social media with the Student Advisory Board and SCS Outreach programmes.
- Develop an S2S Strategic Plan 2025-2030 in consultation with S2S volunteers and the SCS Student Advisory Board.

Student Learning Development (SLD)

SLD helps Trinity undergraduate and postgraduate students reach their academic potential. Services include workshops, drop-in clinics and one-to-one academic support in areas such as academic writing, presentation skills, exam & assessment skills, viva & oral defence, motivation & procrastination, time management and using stress positively.



SLD Highlights & Challenges

Staffing and over-reliance on volunteers remains SLD's largest challenge. Total core SLD staff comprises 1.9 FTE. An additional 1-year fixed term contract (0.6 FTE) was granted from Jan 2024 – Jan 2025, based on temporary funding. SLD successfully recruited 1 new volunteer, retired academic staff member and tutor, Celia Holland in 2024. With the possibility of a retired Senior Tutor coming on board in Sept 2024, SLD will have 3 volunteer staff members in 2024-25. Approximately 66% of SLD's bookable appointments are facilitated by volunteers or casual staff.

A total of 5,011 student attendances were recorded at SLD events & activities during 2023-24. This figure includes all workshops (3,786 attendees), appointments (420 attendances), facilitated groups (79 attendances), the Academic Writing Centre (381 attendances) and 7 PhD Research support groups (35 students). SLD ran 5 workshops in Trinity during National Academic Integrity Week as part of a campus wide initiative. 132 students attended these workshops.

The **Writing Centre** facilitated 381 appointments for students seeking advice in all areas of academic writing & referencing. Writing support remains the most frequently requested service, with 46 workshops run in 2023-24 for students and in departments.

Feedback shows that SLD is recognised as a supportive and approachable multidisciplinary team of academic advisors, volunteers and tutors which is valued by students and staff for its practical, applied approach to helping UG and PG students with academic, writing, self-management and personal development skills.

Additional Challenges this year included staff absences in Semester 1 2023, meaning that 12 workshops were cancelled at late notice, including provision to Library HITs, Orientation and departmental workshops. Turnover of casual staff in the Writing Centre also meant that fewer appointments were offered in Semester 1. The SLD Blackboard module needs revision in 2024-25 and risks becoming unfit for purpose if this is not addressed.

Postgraduate Services

- Postgrads attended 368 out of the 795 individual appointments delivered (46% of all 1:1 SLD appts), indicating a demand for tailored PG supports. 52% of these PG appointments were delivered to students from outside the EU.
- 46 participants successfully completed the **Planning and Managing your Research Process (PMRP)** for PhD students – a 5 ECTS credit bearing module offered both online and in-person.
- 146 students registered for the **Postgraduate Academic Skills Summer School**, with 229 attendances at the 10 sessions. This represented a 23% increase compared with 2023.
- 6 PhD candidates joined the **Academic Writing Centre** as tutors. These tutors representing faculties across campus.
- **PG Research groups** – a framework was provided to students, based on their circumstances/preferences, to network and create their own PG peer support groups. The groups aim to sustain motivation, support productivity, promote independent learning and encourage sustainable interaction with other PGs, thereby enhancing academic progress and sense of community.

SLD Service Levels	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
SLD Workshops No. of student attendances (on-site/in schools/online)	5,231	5,966	4,184	4,501	3,786
Academic Writing Centre (individual services only)	98	375	525	473	381
SLD 1:1 Appointments (includes drop-in learning support & PG clinic)	346	494	527	411	420
Facilitated Writing/Study Groups	280	425	498	141	79

Student Feedback on SLD

UG and PG students who provided feedback rated SLD services and staff as helpful, knowledgeable, and friendly in supporting learners across the entire range of services.

Individual appointment feedback:

Item	% endorsing
My concerns have improved following my SLD appointment.	89%
I will make a positive change to my practice.	88%
My confidence in my skills and abilities has increased.	81%
I will perform better in my academic work following this consult.	81%

Workshop feedback:

Item	% endorsing
I learned something useful.	84%
The workshop will improve me as a student.	85%
I will make a positive change to my practice.	84%

Recommendations included:

- Promoting SLD services more on campus, in academic departments and targeting specific student groups, for example postgraduates who may not be aware of the services.
- Providing more discipline specific academic supports aimed at STEM/HS (e.g. how to write lab reports) as well as AHSS students.

The current SLD staff come from diverse, multi-disciplinary backgrounds:

Team	Disciplinary backgrounds
Core Team	STEM/Engineering, Arts Humanities/Education, Psychology/Education and Health Sciences/Education
Volunteers	Mathematics & Statistics, and Zoology
AWC Tutors	Biochemistry & Immunology, English, and Economics

Quotes from student feedback on SLD team and services

"Booking an appointment is one of the best things that I did for my academic journey. Thank you."

"Instead of being optional - I believe this service should be compulsory for postgrad students who have not undertaken any studies in a number of years."

"The meeting provided me the guidance to reference my academic submissions and pointed me to very helpful resources."

"I think SLD should have a more prominent place across campus and especially should be integrated more into the classroom."

"My SLD session with [staff name] was instrumental to my staying at TCD. I subsequently nominated her for recognition through the university's teaching award program."

Feedback from academic staff partners on SLD team and services

"The main issue regarding SLD's services, from the postgraduate perspective, isn't any needed improvement in the services, but an increased awareness."

"I have no improvements to suggest, all students I meet who have used SLD have been very positive in their feedback. I wish more students knew about your services and availed of them."

SLD Plans for 2024-25

- Consolidate service delivery by embedding the additional 0.6 FTE taken on this year on a permanent contract.
- Greater promotion of SLD services across campus; further develop areas of high need and student usage e.g. PG, non- EU, and both PG/UG academic supports within different disciplines and embedded in the curriculum and academic departments.
- Development of a new SLD website.
- Revise the SLD Blackboard module.

Counselling

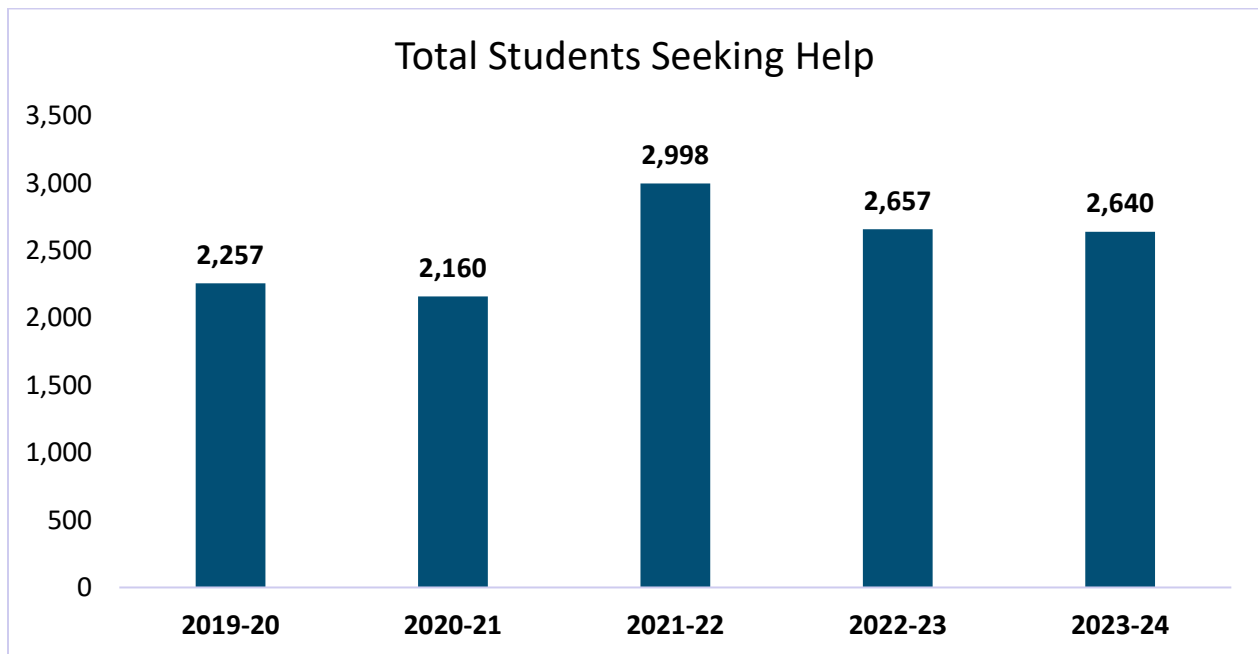
The Counselling Service provides expertise on student mental health to the whole Trinity community and delivers free, confidential, and professional therapeutic services, available to all Trinity students.

For the 3rd year in a row, over 2,600 students sought counselling supports.

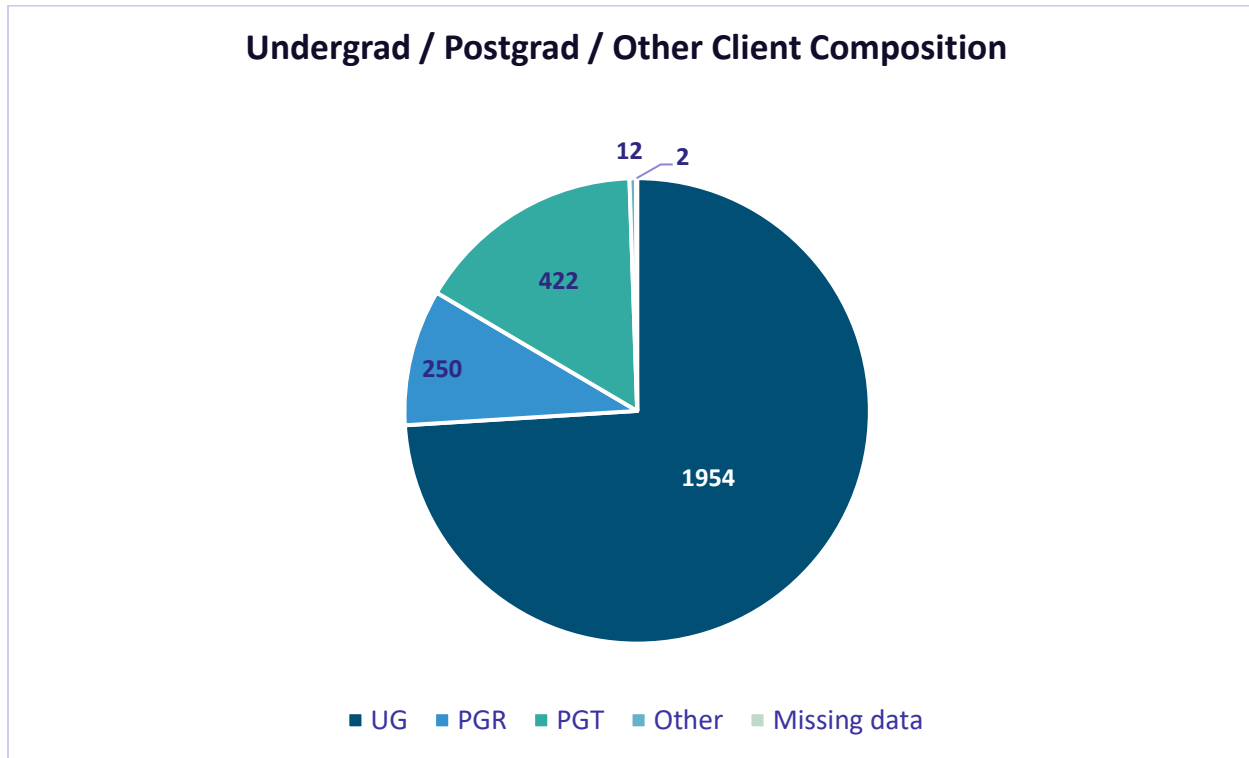


Counselling Service Levels

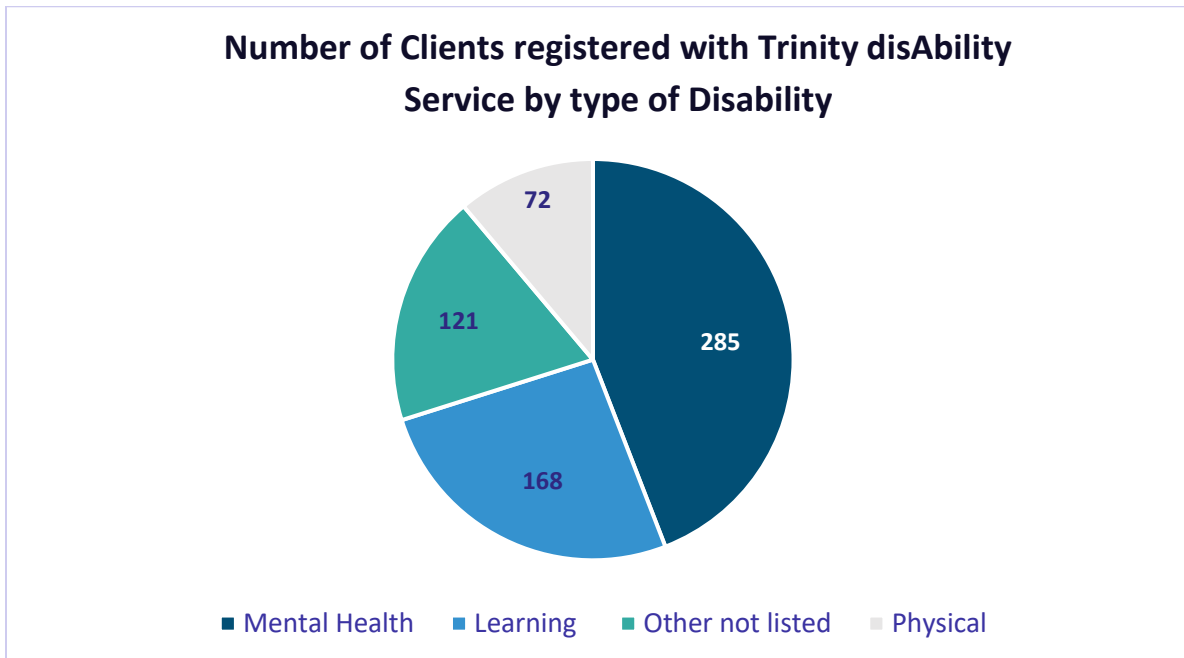
The graph below shows that the sharp spike in demand seen in 2021-22 following the removal of strict Covid-19 social distancing measures has settled into a plateau. This trend is seen across all in-person clinical services for the past 2 academic years: a stable percentage of the student body seeking help, comprised of high client numbers relative to the pandemic years.



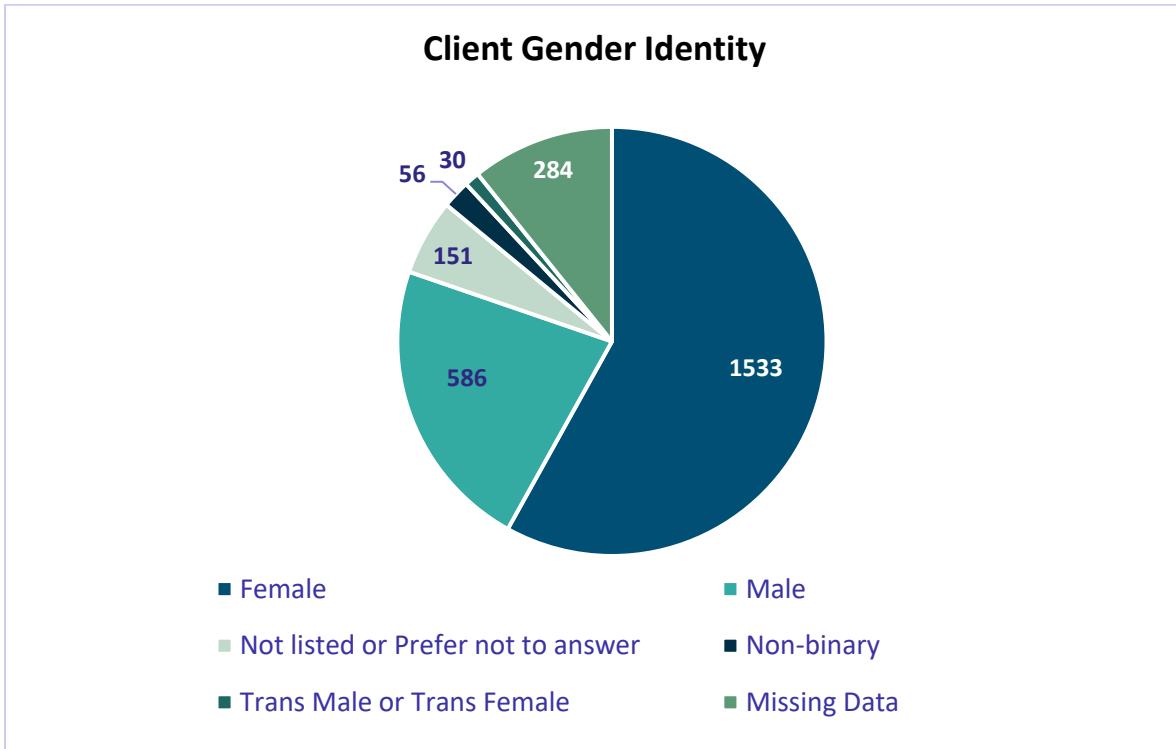
Client Demographics



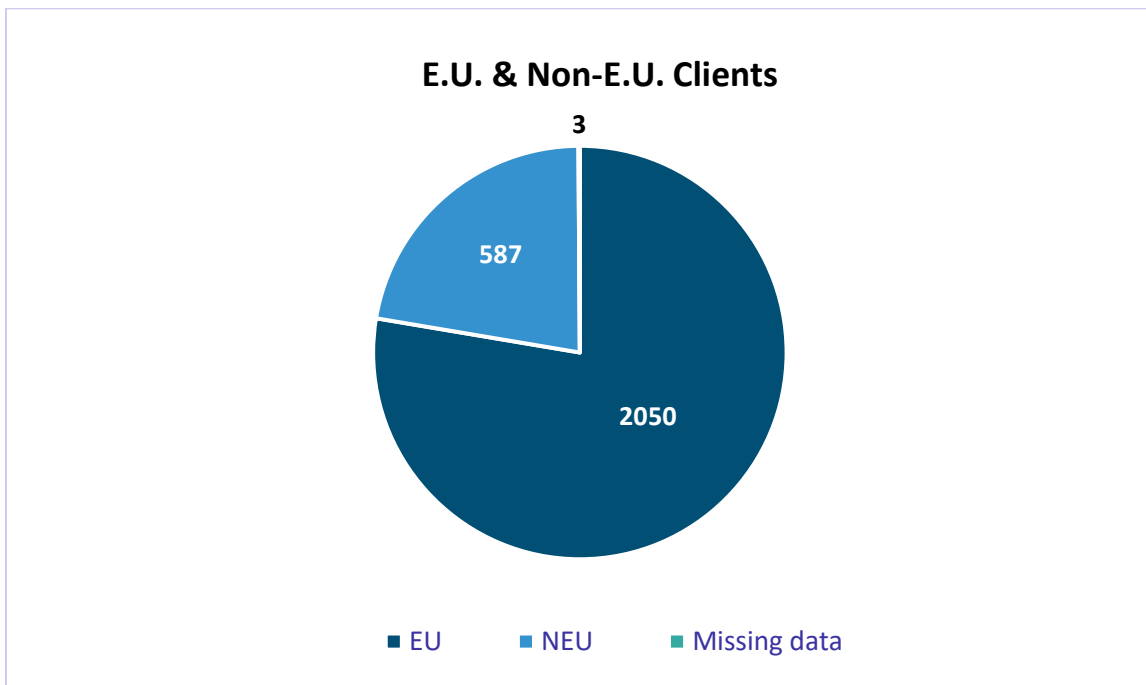
Undergraduates comprised 74% of all SCS clients, and 69% of the TCD student body.



Students registered with a mental health disability were the largest cohort of those indicating registration with the disAbility service.



Clients indicate their gender identity when they register with the SCS.



EU and Non-EU client usage was in-line proportionate to the student body.

All Clients

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total unique Clients	2,257	2,160	2,998	2,657	2,640
Total Sessions (incl. 1:1, Group & online)	12,425	11,068	15,313	14,114	14,756
Total TCD Enrolment	18,982	18,871	20,566	21,488	22,120
% of TCD Students served	11.8%	11.4%	14.6%	12.3%	11.9%

One-to-One Services

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1:1 Counselling Clients	2,074	2,038	2,879	2,572	2,570
% of TCD students served	10.9%	10.8%	14%	12%	11.5%
1:1 appts attended	9,679	8,528	11,419	11,201	11,608
Avg. 1:1 Appts per Client	4.6	4.2	4	4.4	4.5

Group Services

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Group Counselling Clients	297	225	255	279	301
Group appts attended	1,257	1,248	1,354	1,502	1,406
Group Sessions	252	282	323	337	330
Avg. Group Appts per Client	4.2	5.5	5.3	5.4	4.7

Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (cCBT)



The SCS's partnership with SilverCloud by Amwell gives free access to CBT-based supports for Depression, Anxiety, Stress Management, Sleep issues, Body Image issues, and Resilience-building to all Trinity students. Weekly progress reviews and feedback from SCS staff help students get the most out of these programmes. The strategic goal of increasing both SilverCloud users and sessions for 2023-24 was met, putting the SCS in a good position for further growth in this area.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
cCBT users	955	685	506	259	349
cCBT review & feedback sessions	1,952	2,099	2,540	1,411	1,742

Emergency Appointment Clinic

This clinic allows students in crisis to get same-day support every weekday from 09:00 – 17:00. It also provides an advice clinic for Trinity staff, family and concerned peers. For the 3rd year in a row, over 900 crisis appointments were attended, a number 74% higher than 2019-20 levels.



	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
No. Emergency Appts Attended (incl. Telephone, Video & In-person)	553	595	1,109	919	960
No. Clients Attending Emergency Appts	406	413	698	605	598
Avg. Emergency appts / client	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.6

Note: Emergency appointments are included annually in the “One-to-One Clients” table totals above.

In addition to emergency appointments, **over 100 hours of crisis consultations** were provided to 114 people in the Trinity community (staff, students, and families). 44% of these crises involved international students from outside the European Union (NEU fee status). For comparison, 22% of the student body were from countries outside the EU in 2023-24 (4,783 out of 22,120 students).

Average Wait Times & Wait List

Students who reach out to the service are assessed and have a plan agreed within **9 working days** on average. Students who were deemed suitable for one-to-one counselling waited on average **29 working days** for their first counselling session. This compares favourably with other community counselling services, such as the National Counselling Service.

Students wishing to avail of immediate support were offered the options of attending weekly drop-in groups, closed therapy groups, online therapy programmes, daily crisis appointments, and external “surge capacity” counselling with an external provider (see below for details).

In addition to immediately available supports, students choosing to wait for 1:1 counselling after triage were offered check-in phone calls (to assess changing need), and coping skills sessions with our Assistant Psychologist team.



Rather than a first-come, first served approach, student need is factored when making decisions about the wait list. Students with critical needs are prioritised, and students who are waiting are encouraged to inform the SCS about any deterioration in their mental health so that their priority level can be revised.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Average wait time for an assessment appointment (working days)	10.8	9.6	10.3	9.6	8.6
Average wait time for counselling after assessment (working days)	23.5	41.8	27.9	24	28.8

“Surge Capacity” counselling was added from the middle of 1st semester until June 2024. Suitable students on the wait list were offered rapid access to up to 3 online counselling appointments with a qualified counsellor working for a private therapy agency. **305 students** from the SCS wait list were offered this option.

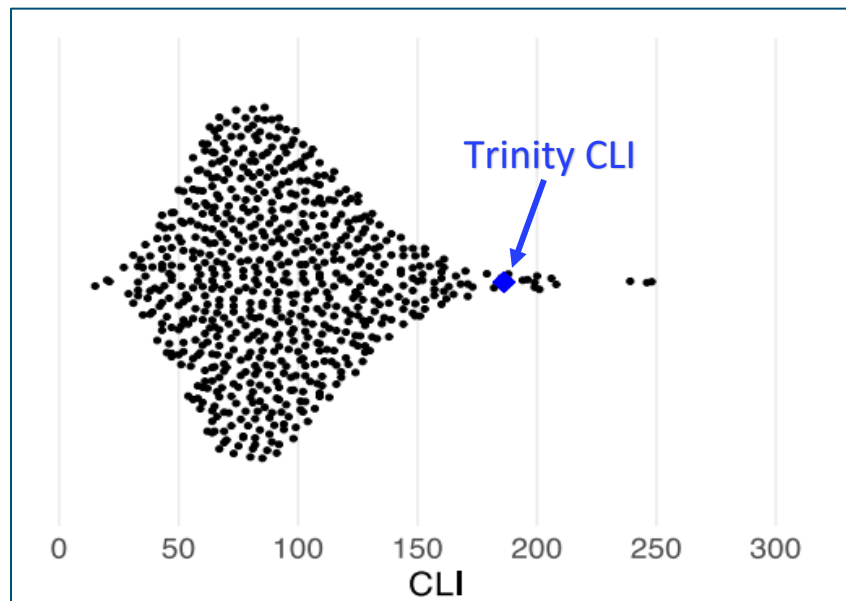
International Comparison of the SCS’s Clinical Load Index (CLI)

The CLI is a consistent and comparable score that describes the ‘standardised caseload’ of a counselling service. It can be thought of as the annual caseload of a typical full-time counsellor. The CLI is used to compare the SCS to 696 other HEI counselling services worldwide.

As noted in the IACS Site Visit Report (2024), **the CLI shifts the question from “How many staff should we have?” to “What experience do we want to students to have when they seek counseling services?”** CLI scores are calculated with the assistance of the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (USA) using 3 figures:

- **Institutional Enrolment:** No. of enrolled students eligible for services (**22,262**)
- **Counselling Centre Utilisation:** No. of students with at least 1 attended counselling appt., 1 July 2023– 30 June 2024 (**2,640**)
- **Centre Clinical Capacity:** No. of contracted clinical hours for a typical week when the SCS is fully staffed (**340**)

Trinity’s SCS CLI score for 2023-24 was **186** - nearly identical to the previous year. Comparison with other services worldwide is show in the scatterplot below. Each black dot below represents the CLI of another HEI, the blue diamond shows Trinity’s CLI.



CLI International Descriptive Stats

- 696 colleges and universities
- Minimum: 15
- Maximum: 248
- Mean: 92
- Median: 88
- Standard Deviation: 35

Thus, a standard, full-time counsellor at Trinity sees **more clients per year than counsellors in 98% of the student counselling services contributing to this dataset**. High CLI’s like this prevent delivering therapy in-line with the needs of the student body and result instead in more ‘triage and crisis’ work. The student experience of the high CLI can be seen in some feedback comments on pages 21-22.

Student Feedback on Counselling

All counselling clients are invited by email at the end of the academic year to complete an anonymous online feedback survey. **315** unique service users responded (12% of all clients).

176 clients gave qualitative feedback, including 285 unique statements (called “meaning units”, or ‘MUs’). The table below shows that praise for the service remained the largest feedback category and retained gains made since 2021-22. There was a slight increase in the proportion of negative feedback re: service resources (staff size, session limits, etc.), and a proportionate decrease in criticism (including wait time dissatisfaction).

Meaning Unit Type	Description	No. Of MUs	Percent of All MUs	% Change from 2022-23 Feedback MUs
Praise	Positive experiences of the SCS, including impact on retention, mental health, and student experience	161	56.5%	0%
Criticism	Negative feedback for the service, incl. dissatisfaction with wait times	61	21.4%	- 8%
Service Resources	Negative comments on session limits, spacing of appts, staffing size, etc.	37	13%	+ 8%
Suggestion	Ideas for improvement of service processes and interventions	26	9.1%	0%
<i>Total</i>		<i>285</i>	<i>100.0</i>	

Select Feedback Comments (anonymised):

Praise

"This is one of the best counselling services I have experienced, even considering those outside of university... I wasn't expecting to experience such support from the counselling service. I think the service is excellent and I really felt heard by the university about my struggles."

"I had an extremely difficult academic year ... Nevertheless, I feel the SCS was a lifeline for me... my time attending a weekly therapy group was also extremely helpful in nurturing aspects of myself I had let wither for so long, and has changed how I view those parts of me."

"The service was the greatest by far. I was having a lot of anxiety and crises with panic attacks. However, the Counsellor played an important factor in my life, which made me calm down and realise there was nothing wrong with me."

"I would have dropped out if I did not have this service available to me and I am really grateful for everyone who helped me. I always had an appointment made if I was struggling, and was never turned away."

"At a time where I was most in need, the support of the student counselling services assisted my recovery and strengthening my ability to cope with major issues and continue in my studies. I was met with respect and care at every juncture."

"SCS helped me a lot with coping with my mental illnesses. I struggle with severe anxiety and depression, which can make functioning in my daily college life very difficult. They helped me find healthy coping mechanisms that worked for me, as well as started working through some of my deeper problems."

"The team were always supportive and there to help me in the best way they could - in one instance I attended when feeling very, very low, and the therapist I saw ensured that I was safe, arranged transport home for me, and arranged for an emergency appointment with my GP - something I was unable to access by myself. Although my experience with the service was limited, it was a crucial step in my recovery."

"I felt extremely apprehensive and anxious about returning to college, and the SCS helped to allay that by determining the support I needed and pushing me to proactively engage with it."

"The group counseling changed my life for the better and it's a really excellent and important option for students in similar circumstances."

"[Counsellor's name] was great...She really helped me talk through different issues and I'm grateful for her help... She helped me to open up and talk more, and pushed me to seek the help I needed. My mental health strongly impacted my personal and academic lives and with the help I received ... I've honestly never been better mentally."

"This service helped me through very hard times and gave me the foundations to tackle future hurdles in life. I owe a lot to this service."

"The Rainbow Group is a place to connect with others and reflect on what is going on in my life. I find it very helpful and a source of strength and mental clarity and a place to process emotions. Very importantly it is a space where I feel accepted as I am, and this is rare because a lot of other college experiences have an undercurrent of being judged whether academically, socially or as a prospective employee."

"The service really helped me - I was unable to find any services outside of college at the time and really needed the service starting my first year of college. If I had not been offered the services, I don't think I would have been able to stay attending college. It was really helpful for me to have services linked with college - I liked that it was nearby campus and my counsellor also helped me with how to explain to lecturers my situation (poor attendance, etc.)."

Criticisms & Suggestions

"I had four or five sessions with different people every time so it's not consistent and I had to repeat so many every time without getting any help."

"It would be great to see improved service access for students who need to go 'off-books,' as this is a time when they most need support, which can make a huge difference in whether or not students feel supported to return to college."

"It is understaffed, so while the counsellors are excellent, there is a constant background hum that they want rid of you in a certain number of sessions."

"I would have had a better experience with the counselling services if I had had an in-person session. Trinity Counselling Service needs to improve its wait times and should be able to offer one-on-one counselling for all students. I felt, when doing my SNAP appointment, that I only deserved an in-person appointment if I had a serious mental health issue, and not if I was struggling on a lesser scale."

"The backlog is a ridiculous issue that seriously needs to be addressed to meet the needs of students."

"I think you need to hire more counsellors, as it was incredibly hard to get even a SNAP appointment and I didn't even get to receive a proper appointment afterwards to continue care... It's also incredibly difficult to ask for help mentally, and then to ask for help and be put on a waitlist ...[it] is incredibly disheartening... I understand that alternatives were offered but again it's hard to ask for help in the first place, so asking for help and then being told to go elsewhere is super unwelcoming and makes you feel as if you're not in as much need of counseling than others, so therefore you shouldn't have bothered asking in the first place..."

"I wish that we were able to avail of more sessions throughout the year/summer, because now there will be a period of time where I have no counselling because I used up all my sessions and need to save them for semester time."

"I was told during one of the first meetings that I could attend a limited number of appointments in an academic year (4 or 6 or something, not a lot), which sounded daunting, as I didn't know what would happen if I still needed support after using all the appointments. I think some more info about what would happen then, would have been helpful."

"The SNAP appointment and follow-up check in call were really timely and useful. However, the waitlist for one-to-one counselling was way too long in my opinion. ... I had to do a lot of my own work and get through it myself as opposed to having professional support. It was affecting many areas of my life and was a difficult time for me. In general, I don't think the provision of service was timely enough at all."

Outreach Activities

Outreach to both students and staff forms a vital part of SCS strategy, and seeks to improve mental health literacy, reduce stigma, educate on available support pathways, and teach skills for referring students in-need. In addition to routine staff trainings, staff outreach this year included trainings for Health Sciences Practice Educators in hospital placement sites, the TAP team, and TCPID.



Student volunteers (above), and students' top tips for mental health (left) at one of the Service's outreach "table" events, The Hamilton Building



The following table shows the "reach" of Outreach work since 2019.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
No. student attendances @ preventative trainings (incl. Together Consent)	1,981	1,205	1,197	1,501	1,268
No. student attendances @ embedded departmental mental health trainings	1,113	625	841	701	803
Student Advisory Group Members	16	20	21	5	7
Total Outreach Programme student contacts	3,094	1,850	2,059	2,207	2,078
No. Trinity Staff Trained	250	275	300	324	384

Note: This was the final year in which Together Consent trainings were run through the SCS.

Counselling Impact on Student Retention and Net Benefit to Trinity

All clients are asked to answer a feedback question to help understand counselling's role in retention & progression:

“To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you to stay at college?”

N/A (not an issue for me)

1 = Not at all

2 = To a limited extent

3 = One of many factors

4 = An important factor

5 = The most significant factor

After removing feedback responses for clients who indicated withdrawing from their course and those who were in final year, 77 out of 315 students rated this question a 4 or 5 and a further 48 rated a 3. Conservatively estimating the per-student income to Trinity in the following year at €8,000 (student contribution & HEA funding – however, some students bring much higher income to the university), the SCS delivered a potential net benefit to Trinity of €616,000:

77 (students rating 4 or 5) x €8,000 = €616,000 net benefit to Trinity in 2024-25.

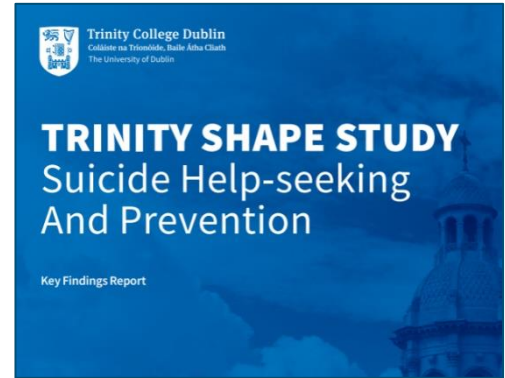
Other Highlights

- In partnership with the TCD Risk Office, the SCS hosted a campus-wide symposium during Mental Health Week (Oct) called *“Mental Health is All Our Business.”* Emceed by the Dean of Students, this event convened students, staff and community partners, and featured guest speakers from Student Counselling, College Health, the Trinity disAbility Service, the Senior Tutor's Office, Trinity INC, and Trinity's Ecumenical Chaplaincy.



Mental Health Is All Our Business, The GMB, October 2023

- In July 2023 the SCS launched its key findings & recommendations report for the **Suicide, Help-Seeking, and Prevention (SHAPE) study**, which surveyed the entire student body on experiences of suicidal thoughts, self-harm behaviours, past suicide ‘attempts,’ and demographic information. Over 1,300 students completed the survey.



- Roll-out of Blackboard module: *Identifying & Responding to Distressed & At-risk Students*. In July 2023 a 2-module online training was launched to upskill Trinity staff on recognising and referring student mental health issues to the correct services. This training was developed in partnership with the HEA and the Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education Ireland (PCHEI).
- SCS worked to ensure a robust provision of Continuous Professional Development for upskilling staff and maintain a high standard of knowledge in relation to current research in student mental health. This included events on addiction, working with psychosis, working with neurodiverse clients, and racial, ethnic & gender diversity. The SCS team also provided representation at the Student Affairs Ireland conference, PCHEI conference, EWCA Conference, UCD Systemic conference, UUP & EAP Symposium, among others.

Counselling Plans for 2024-25

1. Increase accessibility and relevance of support by:
 - Providing daily drop-in SNAP (assessment) appointments, Mon – Fri mornings.
 - Monitoring client progress 3 sessions at a time, extending / ending counselling as indicated.
 - Ensuring there is at least 1 drop-in counselling group daily, Mon – Fri.
 - Extending the Ethnic Minorities Support Group for the entire AY 2024-25.
2. Build on existing evidence-based practices through hosting new researched interventions, targeting the needs of students with eating concerns, in collaboration with the TCD Doctorate in Counselling Psychology programme.
3. Upskill the clinical team by deploying several staff to attend Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) skills training with HSE trainers. DBT aims to help people with emotion regulation difficulties.

Administration

The Administration Team is vital to ensuring the efficiency and broad reach of all services, providing central admin support and expertise in the management of human resources, finances, compliance, systems, and facilities for the Services. The team is also responsible for counselling appointment and waitlist management, including cover of the Service's email, phone lines and reception.



Key Admin Metrics

- Scheduled over **900** same-day emergency appointments.
- Filled approx. **1,400** cancelled/rescheduled counselling appointments with other clients to ensure efficient use of counsellor time.
- Sent over **22,200** appointment reminders via the Titanium scheduling system.
- Supported in the scheduling of approx. **16,257** in person, zoom and telephone appointments and processed approx. **2,690** SNAP bookings.

We continue to explore ways to automate more of these activities.

Key Achievements

- Preparation for, coordination of and participation in IACS Accreditation review.
- Refurbishment of 1:1 counselling and office spaces in South Leinster Street.
- Preparation for the migration of SCS website to Terminal 4 platform.
- Review and updating of SCS email archiving and deletion procedure and policy.
- Management of 6 separate recruitment competitions and the filling of 2 vacancies, as well as subsequent on-boarding and induction. Remote/on-site recruitment and induction of sessional workers, volunteers, and trainees, including a focus on Health & Safety assessment and training for blended working.

- Review and implementation of onboarding processes for sessional and trainee staff, including the creation of a comprehensive induction pack for clinical new starters.
- Management of limited space resources to ensure maximum efficiency in service delivery.
- Development of SLAs with external service providers to increase surge capacity at peak times.
- Development and management of all related referral and reporting processes.
- Review and updating of online appointment scheduling within Titanium.
- Worked in partnership with the Data Protection Office and ITS to improve IT security and GDPR compliance.

The Administration Team would like to thank our colleagues in Human Resources, IT Services and Estates & Facilities, who help us to maintain our high level of service to students.

Staffing & Budget

Staffing

Area	FTE
Admin Team	5.17
Assistant Psychologists ¹	2.58
Counsellors ²	14.32
Director	1.00
S2S ³	2.57
Sessional Counsellors ⁴	3.26
SLD ⁵	2.13
Together Consent ⁶	0.4
Total	31.43

Numbers reported are actual worked FTEs (rather than approved contract FTEs), to take account of vacancies etc.

- One AP post was funded by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiative (MHI).
- Includes 3 x MHI-funded posts totalling 2.5 FTE in the reporting period.
- Includes 1 x S2S EO (0.07 FTE) funded by Trinity Development and Alumni (TDA) and 1 x S2S intern (0.5 FTE) funded by Trinity Trust during the reporting period.
- Includes sessional counsellors funded by the MHI during the months of April and May 2024 only.
- Includes 5 posts amounting to 2.13 FTE in the reporting period. One post totalling 0.43 FTE was MHI-funded.
- Relates to 1 x Consent Intern post, which ceased in November 2023.

Budget 2023-24

Type	Amount
Income	€394,364
Pay Costs	€2,514,190
Non-Pay Costs	€179,132

Income:

- Includes €23,161.06 of TDA funding, €13,843.13 of which financed an S2S EO from Jun-Sep 2024, and €5,000 to fund the S2S mentor training programme from Mar-May 2024. The remaining balance (€4,317.93) was spent on sessional counsellors.
- Includes €283,966 from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiative for AY 2023-24
- Includes €22,132 of SFA Oediverse funding for the 2023-24 academic year.
- Includes €4,000 in reserves from Trinity INC (€2,000) and the TCD EDI Office (€2,000) to fund the Ethnic Minorities Support Group, 2024-25.

Pay costs:

- Includes €355,425 in MHI-funded posts as follows: 1 x AP post, 3 x Counselling posts totalling 2.5 FTE, 1 x SLD post (0.43 FTE in the reporting period), 22 x Sessional Employees for April and May 2024, and 1 x S2S intern for the July-September 2024 period.

Non-Pay costs

- Includes €5,562 on essential soundproofing works for new counselling offices in 7-9 South Leinster Street and €11,039 on replacement printers, one for 7-9 South Leinster Street and the other for House 47.

The financial year runs 1st Oct to 30th Sept



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