

Annual Report 2018-19

Student Counselling, Student Learning Development and Student 2 Student Services

December 2019

3rd Floor, 7-9 S. Leinster St.
Trinity College Dublin
Dublin 2



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

SUPPORTING TRINITY'S ACADEMIC MISSION FOR OVER 25 YEARS

Since 1993, the SCS / SLD / S2S Services have grown to support over 25,000 Trinity students across their academic journey. These services provide expertise in mental health, social, and academic wellbeing for the whole Trinity Community. Through collaboration, compassion and connection, we help students to develop.

Mission:

Support through collaboration, connection and compassion.



Vision:

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



2018-19 Highlights

We reached over 33% of the student body.



Over 2,790 students were served on-site
(Counselling, SLD and S2S)



Over 4,000 first-year students received S2S mentoring



Over 2,900 students attended SLD workshops in their
departments

“I like the fact there are so many diverse forms of help for students. University can be really challenging so the fact there is such a multitude of possibilities to be helped is reassuring.”

- Service User Feedback Quote, 2019

We secured a portion of €1.5 million HEA funding for a 3-year Innovation and Transformation HEA Project in which the SCS Director is Principle Investigator. Commenced work on Work Package 3: Peer-Assisted Transition Skills (Retention and Engagement Strategy) and Work Package 1: Practice Research Organization for Student Counsellors Ireland (Counselling Data and Outcomes). These projects are collaborations with UCD and Athlone IT.

To better market the SCS/SLD/S2S service in its mission of supporting students' emotional, academic and social development **we agreed preliminary plans to rebrand as *The Student Development Services***.

Student 2 Student (S2S)

S2S provides social and transitional support for all incoming First Year students.

S2S celebrated a small increase on volunteer numbers based on 17-18 but are still struggling to recruit and train in large numbers as volunteers contend more and more with working and/or commuting on top of full-time study.



Volunteer retention was also an issue at orientation due to the proximity of supplemental exams.

Service Levels

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
No. First Years Mentored	5,149	4,419	4,318
No. Volunteer Mentors	842	695	763
No. of Peer Supporters	32	30	32
Total S2S Volunteers	874	725	764
No. of Peer Supporter - Peer mtgs attended	88	127	104

Although there was a fall in the number of Peer Support meetings there was an increase in number of student cases and in Peer Support volunteers.

Highlights

- Secured funding with SLD under the *HEA Innovation & Transformation Student Service's Retention and Engagement Strategy* to develop a

combined Social, Emotional and Academic Transition Mentoring model, including a volunteer management data system

- Streamlined and updated the Mentor Training programme - 20% shorter but now includes Graduate Attributes and reflective practice
- Launched new website including volunteer portal and automated options for Peer Support requests, reference requests, volunteer reimbursement and staff requests for student volunteers
- Expanded Mentor programme to include students from the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Student Feedback

Feedback from 1st years

“Best support service for first years in my opinion. Really helped me get familiar with the resources provided by the university.”

“S2S experience was essential, especially for the first few weeks. Without my mentors, I would have dropped out. It is very hard getting used to the course, but they help immensely with tips. I liked the informal friendly nature of the meetings. I honestly think that the service is flawless.”

“My peer mentors are great! They have helped me with small issues that could have spiraled out of control into big issues.”

“I think the S2S program has definitely improved my time at college and I hope to become a mentor next year.”

“Honestly, it is one of the best things the college came up with...I benefited so much from my S2S mentors. I don't think it can get any better!”

“They were the difference between making the first year an enjoyable or a miserable one. Their help and support and sincere care about the students is most admirable.”

Feedback from Volunteers

“[S2S] gives you a sense of a college togetherness. It made me realise that in order to get the most out of Trinity you have to give back.”

“Volunteering with S2S was an amazing opportunity. I loved helping the new students to settle into Trinity life style and I felt that the S2S service was really great way to give back to the college... I was able to establish better communication skills, listening skills and I myself felt I was settling into college better for it.”

"It increased my organisation and planning when arranging meet ups. It also broadened my knowledge about services in college. Improved my problem solving skills when dealing with and questions of queries that my mentees had and it also allowed me to become better friends with my mentor buddy."

"Gained valuable communication skills, both by working with my other mentors and by writing weekly emails to mentees. I've gained confidence in interacting with people I've never met before. It's also a great opportunity to pass down valuable knowledge to new students and help their transition to Trinity."

"I definitely improved my listening skills as I became more conscious of how to best put people at ease when they came to me with questions or problems. It gave me the opportunity to engage with other college departments."

"It made me think differently about myself, that I was the one sort of passing on wisdom rather than receiving it, which feels like such a short time ago! I also think I picked up some valuable organisational skills and have had that boost in terms of experience working in a team."

"It has given me a lot of experience in areas of my life I really want to develop. It's given me more confidence and I've made amazing friends. I'm also more aware of the services Trinity offers."

S2S Plans for 2019-20

- To advance Work Package 3 of the HEA Innovation and Transformation funded "Student Services: Retention and Engagement Strategy" in collaboration with SLD. This will include developing and implementing a volunteer management data system and piloting a combined Social/Academic/Emotional model for peer-led transition in one TCD course and one UCD course simultaneously
- To develop the infrastructure and training for a **Student Advisory Board** to work with Counselling, SLD, S2S and our Administrative Team.
- Develop and pilot a model for co-facilitated outreach teaching with Counselling
- Undertake **Investing in Volunteers Accreditation** (process scheduled from Jan 2020-Jan 2021)

Student Learning Development (SLD)

SLD helps students reach their academic potential by providing a broad, relevant range of academic skills services. Through large groups, smaller workshops, and individual/tailored services, SLD aids students in meeting the challenges of university study.

Nearly 3,000 students attended 80 departmental workshops, including off campus workshops for those students studying at St. James Hospital, Tallaght Hospital and TBSI. Academic Writing for both Postgraduate and Undergraduate students was the most requested topic, representing 39% of all requests.



SLD delivered 52 in-house workshops, attended by 1,111 students. This includes workshops run as part of the PMRC 5 ECTS Module, PG Summer School and TCD Writing Day.

Our SLD Blackboard Module had 598 enrollments, an increase of 88% on the previous academic year.

Attended individual appointments & drop-in appointments have increased 12% from 2016-17 to 18-19, (see table below).

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
No. of Students attending SLD Workshops (on-site)	884	889	1111
No. of Students attending SLD Workshops (in schools)	3324	2845	2947
No. of SLD 1:1 Appointments (includes drop-in learning support)	508	462	589
No. Students attending SLD 1:1 Appts	391	348	438

SLD Highlights 2018-19

- New Postgraduate ‘Shut Up & Write’ Café running weekly in the Buttery, started in April 2019 - 107 attendances in the first 12 weeks.
- Researching Peer Assisted Study Skills (PASS) programmes as part of the *HEA Innovation and Transformation* Project, Work Package 3 in partnership with S2S
- Funding won from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in collaboration with CAPSL. ‘Learning from Student Success: Barriers and Facilitators’ Seminar was run on 21st February 2019 in TCD’s Global Room.
- Business Wellbeing Module coordinated & piloted by SLD in collaboration with the School of Business and Student Services.
- Participation in 13 sessions during the Library HITS programme Sept, Oct & Nov 2018. 384 students attended over the 13 sessions.

SLD Plans for 2019-20

- SLD propose to consolidate some of our current services under the banner of ‘SLD Writing Centre’ and to increase service by adding a weekly Writing Clinic for UG students.
- Continue researching best practice and implementation of PASS programmes as part of the HEA Innovation and Transformation Project, Work Package 3 with key outputs: Literature Review (Nov 2019), National Symposium on Peer Led Student Transition Programmes, Summary report for the Symposium.
- Improve our student reach as part of a consolidated approach to marketing & branding, alongside S2S & SCS

Student Feedback on SLD

“I have implemented a new mindset and approach to exam (introduced in, and brought on by, my appointment) which enables me to feel more confident and able when going into an exam.”

“Lab reports improved, got a 1st”

“Managing my relationships with staff.”

“Great service to have in TCD, friendly staff and student-focused.”

“As a visiting student this year was a change in my way studying and being assessed so the service explained and gave advice to me in terms of essay writing and stress So this year was a turning point in term of my self-development”

“I would have dropped out before Christmas but for the intervention of your service.”

“I am very thankful to all in SLD. I will need more help and I am able to ask.”

In-house Workshop Feedback

- 98% of students (n=327) responded that they had learned something useful at an in-house workshop.
- 95% (n=325) of students responded that they would make a positive change in their practice because of the workshop attended.
- 93% of students (n=327) stated that the workshop would improve them as a student.
- Skills learned during the workshop (n=240):
 - Self-management skills: 61.6%
 - Time management: 48.3%
 - Working independently: 35%
 - Critical thinking: 52%

Individual Appointment Feedback

- 85% of respondents (n=53) said that the concerns brought to SLD had ‘Improved Greatly’ or ‘Improved Some’
- 67% of respondents (n=51) reported that SLD helped them to do better in their academic work

Counselling

The Counselling Service provides expertise in student mental health for the whole Trinity community. This expertise is increasingly relevant for students and staff:

Since 2016 the student body has grown by 5.2%. The number of students seeking counselling services has grown by nearly 21%.



Services are delivered in 4 locations: 7-9 S. Leinster St., The Rubrics, Trinity Hall, and Marino Institute of Education. Over **150 appointments per week** are provided on campus in **The Rubrics**, where the SCS currently uses 6 temporary counselling rooms.

Overall Clients

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change
Total unique Clients (All Counselling services)	1851	2008	2236	+ 20.7
% of Student Body using all services	10.5%	11.1%	12.5%	+ 2
Total Trinity Student Body	17,630	18,081	18,545	+ 5.2

One-to-One Clients

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change
No. 1:1 Counselling Clients	1750	1,822	2,141	+ 22.3
% of Student Body using 1:1 counselling	9.9%	10.1%	11.5%	+ 1.6
No. 1:1 appts attended	7,400	7,383	9,193	+ 24.2
Avg. 1:1 Appts per Client	4.2	4.0	4.3	-

Group Clients

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change
No. Group Counselling Clients	282	338	193	- 31.5
No. Group appts attended	1,131	1,383	1,248	+ 10.3
No. Group Sessions	197	225	231	+ 17.1
Avg. Group Appts per Client	4	4.1	6.2	-

Online Clients

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change
No. of SilverCloud Students	358	422	607	+ 70
No. of SilverCloud Sessions	1,300	1,609	2,283	+ 75.6

Emergency Provision

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change
No. Emergency Appts Attended	505	588	721	+ 42
No. Clients Attending Emergencies	447	440	540	+ 20.8
No. Emergency Phone Triage	0	275	323	+ 17.4
No. Clients Rec'ing Phone Triage	0	223	255	+ 14.3

Severity of Students' Presenting Problems

Before each triage appointment, students complete the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms – 34 (CCAPS-34). This is a standardized psychometric instrument used to help prioritize client needs. Scores for symptoms of *Depression, Generalized Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Academic Distress, Eating Problems, Hostility, Alcohol Use, Global Distress* are automatically generated by the SCS's Titanium

Schedule system. Risk items for Suicidal Thoughts and Homicidal Thoughts are included. The table below shows that TCD clients rate slightly higher on Generalized Anxiety than the international sample of university students (N = 173,521). While clinical terms like “Depression” are used to the Presenting Issue Scales, these terms are used for informing assessments of mental health rather than diagnoses. For example, the “Generalized Anxiety” scale highlights symptoms often found with Generalized Anxiety Disorder, but a diagnosis of GAD cannot be made from the scale alone.

CCAPS-34 average scores at triage, 2018-19 (N = 1,919)

Presenting Issue Scale	International Avg (Range = 0-4)†	International Standard Dev	Trinity Avg (Range = 0-4)	Trinity Standard Dev	Cohen's <i>d</i> *	% of TCD students higher or lower than Int'l Avg.
Depression	1.65	1.06	1.91	0.97	0.257	+ 7.2%
Generalized Anxiety	1.88	1.03	2.29	0.94	0.412	+ 11.5%
Social Anxiety	1.88	1.04	2.05	0.96	0.164	+ 4.6%
Academic Distress	1.96	1.12	2.28	1.01	0.304	+ 8.5%
Eating Concerns	0.96	1.14	1.1	1.18	0.121	+ 3.4%
Hostility	0.9	0.86	0.9	0.8	0.001	0%
Alcohol Use	0.69	0.92	0.9	1.04	0.221	+ 6.2%
Overall Distress	1.73	0.85	2.0	0.73	0.341	+ 9.5%

† NB: Higher scores from 0-4 = more severe levels of presenting issues.

* When comparing Trinity to International means, Cohen's *d* = 0.2 is considered a 'small' effect size, 0.5 represents a 'medium' effect size and 0.8 a 'large' effect size / difference.

Risk Items & Risk Assessment at Triage

The table below on page 13 shows that 45% of clients (870) indicated some level of suicidal ideation (SI) at triage. This compares to 36% of the international sample. Nearly 12% of clients (227) indicated more extreme levels of SI (responding 3 or 4 out of 4). Fewer Trinity students indicated thoughts of harming others than the International sample (10.5% vs. 13.5 %). The international sample is largely comprised of 3rd and 4th level students from the USA.

Scale: 0 = “Not at all like me” -> 4 = “Extremely like me”

CCAPS-34 Item	% Responses > 0		TCD Response Frequencies, No. (%)				
	<i>Intern'l</i>	<i>TCD</i>	0	1	2	3	4
“I have thoughts of ending my life.”	36	45.4	1046 (54.6)	384 (20.0)	259 (13.5)	149 (7.8)	78 (4.1)
“I have thoughts of harming others.”	13.5	10.5	1707 (89.5)	129 (6.7)	37 (1.9)	22 (1.1)	12 (0.6)

(TCD N = 1,916)

To ensure best clinical practice for clients presenting with risk factors the SCS operates a Priority Client list which is reviewed and case-managed weekly. Clients on this list are given top priority for emergency appointments.

Wait Times (in working days)

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Average days wait for a triage appointment	4	5.4	8.4
Average days wait for counselling following triage	6.1	15	15

The Counselling / Sessional Counselling staffing FTEs have remained at around 11.9 for the past 3 years. Wait times for triage and follow-up appointments have increased with the numbers of students seeking services over the past 3 years. The Admin and Counselling Teams work closely with the Clinical Coordinator to try to keep these wait times as short as possible by:

- Operating a system for prioritising clients after triage
- Communicating with waiting clients regularly
- Filling cancelled and rescheduled appointments
- Ensuring that students have urgent access to counsellors for crisis situations regardless of their wait list status
- NB: students may also avail of S2S Peer Support while waiting for counselling

Outreach & Prevention Work

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
No Students - Preventative Trainings (Consent, Resilience, etc.)	830	689	991
Psycho-educational Workshop attendances	482	292	103
No Students – Trained by request in Schools	426	302	180
Student Advisory Group Members	20	40	48
<i>Total Outreach Programme contacts (excl. Social Media)</i>	1758	1323	1322
No. TCD Staff Trained	240	321	333

Drop-in workshop attendance is down, perhaps due to a perceived poverty of spare time with semesterisation. The SCS also pushes positive mental health content through social media channels under the banner “TCD Headspace.” These include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and blog accounts which tallied over **8,500** interactions.

Counselling Highlights

- Met increased demand - 2,236 students, 12.5% of the student population ~11% increase on 2017-18. 21% increase since 2016.
- In partnership with SU, Consent workshops expanded from Trinity Hall onto campus and First Responder training piloted (supporting disclosures of sexual misconduct).
- Staff training programme continued to develop in partnership with HR and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Student Feedback on Counselling

All students using counselling services are invited to complete an anonymous online feedback survey. **629** unique service users responded (28% of all clients).

Qualitative feedback was largely positive (sample):

"I like the fact there is so many diverse forms of help for students. it can be adjusted for your need between the groups chat the student to student the one to one with a counselling person or the help on internet from the counselling. The phone line which is available late at night is also really nice. University can be really challenging so the fact there is such a multitude of possibilities to be helped is reassuring."

"I had a great experience with the counselling service. They were there for me at a point when there was no one else. They really helped me get through a very difficult time in my life. It would not have been possible for me to complete my course without the support and guidance of my counsellor."

"I feel that the student counselling service is one of the most well-run, fit-for-purpose campus services. The reception staff are kind, helpful, and understanding, and are exactly the kind of people you want to deal with if you're in an emotional crisis."

"I have used the counselling service both this academic year and the two previous academic years. In previous years I received one-on-one counselling, which was hugely beneficial, and I am currently on a waiting list for this type of counselling again. So far this academic year I have attended an initial assessment, and have been taking part in the online programme SilverCloud. It is great to know that there are multiple options available for me, and I have found the online programme a great way to reinforce what I have previously learned in counselling. It is particularly nice to have someone at the other end of SilverCloud to respond to my progress and make suggestions based on my comments. My experience of the service has been overwhelmingly positive, and I do not know how I could have stayed in college the past two years without the support I received."

"I felt that this service was excellent in that it helped me get over my problems with college life. I believe that the people working in the counselling service should be commended for their hard work as this is a vital service for many students in college. I thank you very much for the help and advice I was given."

Some offered feedback on the increase in demand for services (sample):

"I was registered with the service in 2015/16 and 2016/17. It seems this year (2018/19) that the service has gone downhill a bit...There is no definite changes but it feels like the counselling service is

under strain, with not enough counsellors and insecure contracts for the ones remaining. The difference can be felt in the service, through the little details.”

“I understand the reason why wait times between appointments are so long and that there is a huge demand on the service but a month between appointments is extremely difficult to deal with when you are having problems. Anything that can be done to mitigate this would make a huge difference in my opinion as the SCS is one of the most important things run by the college.”

“The process of getting started with a one-to-one counsellor took a bit longer as I really needed to talk to someone within the first month of college but it was the third month before I started counselling appointments. However, I understand that there must be a great deal of strain on the services. Since I have started it’s been going very well for me. I really feel supported by the services.”

A smaller number offered suggestions for improvement (sample):

“I think greater visibility of the service would be of benefit to the student body. The hardest part of the process was making the initial commitment to go, so I think more awareness would help people initially reaching out for support.”

“I am incredibly thankful for all the time and effort put in by the people who run the service, and the only improvement would be that more people are able to avail of it through having more funding and office spaces.”

Counselling Impact on Student Retention & Progression

As seen above, clients sometimes testify to the important role services play in helping them persist in their courses. This is backed-up by quantitative feedback:

All clients are asked to answer the question *“To what extent would you say that ...counselling has helped you to stay at college?”* They choose from this rating scale:

- 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

In 2018-19, **212 students rated this question a 4 or 5**. A further 148 chose a 3 rating.

Counselling's Net Benefit to Trinity

Conservatively estimating the per-student income to Trinity in a subsequent year at €8,000, the Counselling activities of the SCS/SLD/S2S services deliver a potential net benefit to Trinity each year:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
No. students rating 4 or 5	No. final year students giving feedback	A – B = Students retained with counselling support	Estimated income to Trinity per student in subsequent year	C x D = Net benefit to Trinity College Dublin in 2019-20	SCS - SLD - S2S Budget (pg 18)	<i>F – E = SCS/SLD/S2S 2018-19 Budget less net benefit</i>
212	59	153	€8K	€1.2M	€1.44M	€247K

Counselling Plans for 2019-20

In collaboration with SLD and S2S, the Counselling team aims to:

1. Deepen partnerships with students
 - Expand the Consent + Programme across the university community
 - Embed a co-facilitation model for taught outreach
 - Establish a Student Advisory Board
2. Ensure service sustainability & resilience considering Trinity's enrolment targets
 - Develop a sustainable resource model for space and staffing, **including replacing the 6 counselling rooms currently in use at The Rubrics.**
3. Improve service accessibility
 - Revise the stepped care model to ensure continued service efficiency
4. Collaborate with colleagues across Student Services
 - Fully participate in a Trinity-wide Mental Health Audit
 - Be a vital component of the Healthy Trinity Strategy

Staffing & Budget

Staffing Full-time Equivalency

Area	FTE
Admin Team	4.17
Assistant Psychologists	1.46
Counsellors	9.2
Director	1
S2S	2.67
Sessional Counsellors	2.79
SLD	1.9
Case Coordinator	0.4
Total	23.59

Budget 2018-19

Type	Amount
Income	€162K
Pay Costs	€1.5M
Non-Pay Costs	€109K



Administration Team

The Admin Team are vital to ensuring the efficiency and broad reach of all services, providing central admin services to the Department - from Human Resources, Finance, Systems and Facilities management, to year-round, comprehensive cover of the services' phone, email and reception:

Days of the Week	Hours of Cover
Mondays & Thursdays	09:00 - 17:30
Tuesdays & Wednesdays (during term)	09:00 – 19:00
Fridays	09:00 – 17:00

Key Admin Team Metrics

- Filled over 1,000 cancelled/rescheduled counselling appointments with other clients to ensure efficient use of counsellor time
- Remained open during lunchtime every day to enable student drop-in assessments
- Sent over 12,000 appointment reminders
- Managed a counselling wait list totaling over 500 across the academic year

Admin Team Systems/Process Improvements

- Introduction of call and email monitoring for Front Office
- Rostering of staff to specific Front Office activities
- Management of all Admin team tasks through Wrike (project mgmt. software)
- Documentation and improvement of Front Office procedures
- Improved (digital) document management for Admin team

Other Admin Team Achievements

- Recruitment of Administrative Systems Manager
- Restructuring of reporting lines
- Recruitment of Front Office Supervisor
- Support for HEA Innovation & Transformation project
- Event management for Critical Incident Psychological Response Team Master Class with Dr. Christopher Flynn, Virginia Tech University
- Management of 12 separate recruitment competitions
- Training of new staff