

EQUALITY THROUGH ACCESS

WITH HELP FROM THE IRELAND FUNDS, DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY'S ACCESS PROGRAMME IS TRANSFORMING LIVES AND SOCIETIES THROUGH EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT.

Dublin City University (DCU) is located in the heart of Dublin and straddles economically-diverse neighborhoods. With an international reputation of excellence and innovation, DCU is committed to ensuring that opportunity is extended to disadvantaged students from all areas through their Access Programme. The first of its kind in Ireland, DCU began its outreach over 30 years ago to provide entry and then provide ongoing support to students from underrepresented groups. The Ireland Funds is proud to support this remarkably successful program which is resulting in 93% of disadvantaged students completing third-level college education.



Dublin City University
Educational Trust



WHAT HAS SUPPORT FROM THE IRELAND FUNDS MADE POSSIBLE?

- Grants from The Ireland Funds totalling €53,882 supported 45 Access scholars in 2016/17.
- Grants from The Ireland Funds totalling €24,800 from 2011 to 2015 funded the Access Maths Outreach Initiative.

THE SUCCESS STORY OF THE DCU ACCESS PROGRAMME

- 93% of Access Scholars complete their studies
- 53% go on the Master's level or higher
- 96% find employment

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE ACCESS PROGRAMME?

Over 1,000 scholars are currently enrolled in the Access Programme. They are all students under the age of 23 who have completed a Leaving Certificate and are from one of the following target groups:

- Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds living in Ireland
- 1st generation students with no history of 3rd level education in the family
- Students residing in North Dublin in communities with lowest progression to third level education
- Students experiencing double disadvantage (disability and socio-economic disadvantage)
- Young people in the care of the State
- Young carers
- Members of the Traveller community
- Between 8,000 – 10,000 primary and secondary school students partake in DCU Access Initiatives to expose them to college aspirations and mentors



meet CASSIE

STUDIES: **ENGLISH AND GEOGRAPHY – FIRST YEAR**

"In 2017, I became the first person in my family to go to university. I did a Post Leaving Certificate course first and thankfully the Access Programme opened a door to university for me then. Without the Access Programme, I would not be here in DCU today.

Neither of my parents finished school themselves, my dad left school at 13 and my mum left school at 15 when she became pregnant with my older brother. I wasn't really pushed to do well in school but I always loved English and knew that I wanted to be a teacher when I got older. For a few years, I thought college wouldn't be possible for me but something clicked when I was in fourth year and I decided to work hard to give myself a different future. Where I live, I saw a lot of people doing the opposite and I decided that wasn't going to be my life and that my best way out was through education.

My school was linked with DCU and I got to spend a lot of time on campus taking part in programmes run with DCU's Access Programme. It always seemed like a friendlier college. I have absolutely loved my time in DCU so far, my course is great and I love the friends that I have made. The Access Programme has been an amazing support, my Access Officer checks in regularly to make sure everything is going okay and the grant has really helped with the books I need to buy. I need a lot of books for my English modules, they're not hugely expensive but it can really add up."

meet AARON

STUDIES: **BUSINESS – THIRD YEAR**



"Where I live most people just end up getting into trouble. Going to college is not a way of life. I never really had any pressure on me to go to school. When you're seventeen you think you're funny when you're being bold. I came here to DCU and it was the same thing. I was failing all my exams in the first year but I started working with Cathy, from the Access Programme, and she got me a place on campus. I always knew I was better than this so I started investing a lot of my time in college. My grades began to go up. I worked hard and the Access Programme pushed me. Some people in college if they struggle, they talk to their mother or their father but I have no one to talk to. The Access Programme has become my support. If it wasn't for the Access Programme, I'm honestly telling you. I would not be in college."

EDUCATION RESEARCH INNOVATION ENGAGEMENT



meet ROBYNN

STUDIES: **BACHELOR OF ARTS — THIRD YEAR**

"I come from the inner city in Dublin. I'm the eldest of three and also the first in my family to go to college. I had no kind of knowledge of college before that but I knew I wanted to go. DCU came to my school when I was in 6th year. I sat and listened as they told us what was possible. I always knew that I wanted to be a primary school teacher but because of financial reasons, that felt impossible. DCU showed me I could do it and told me they would help me every step of the way.

Now I'm studying Irish and Human Development. I also now go out to the schools and tell the younger kids they can do this. If I can do it, they can do it. We say to those schools' guidance counsellors, 'show us three or four students you think have a college ambition but who may not be getting encouragement at home to pursue that at home.' So, if they have a dream and there's no one pushing that dream at home, we help fill that gap. Some of these children we try to inspire, they've had struggles. They may have lost both parents to drugs. They may be in the care of the state. But they work hard and have drive. **DCU Access Programme means that hard work doesn't go unnoticed.**

It's incredibly rewarding to tell a younger student 'I'm from Ballybough' and to have one of the lads put his hand up and say 'Oh I'm from there too! I didn't think anyone from Ballybough went to college!' I look at them and say, "Well...you can be the second one."