2020/2021 Funded Projects

Project 1: Tenjin Technology, Blanchardstown Campus

Amount awarded: €1,000

The lockdown made it impossible to have face to face interaction with students. Reading a student's facial expression can tell a lot. Accounting requires students to engage constantly and ask questions, and develop skills in self-learning. Tenjin technology is a web-based software application that supports the teaching and learning of accounting and finance. It enables dynamic generation and delivery of accounting and finance educational content. It generates original accounting and finance exams and quizzes on demand. SCORM packages can be generated for deployment in Moodle. Tenjin will aid in revision for students, while helping students/lecturers to identify areas of weakness. Tenjin provides questions and solutions to users in many forms, including MCQ's, quizzes, short and long questions.

Project 2: The Eileen Fitzpatrick fund, City Campus

Amount awarded: €5,000

Covid-19 has impacted many students, presenting with a range of challenges from losing their jobs and falling behind on fees to the more extreme, where students have become homeless. The Eileen Fitzpatrick Fund was set up to support students in urgent, difficult financial situations. Particular support is given to students who cannot access other funding. The fund is managed by the Chaplaincy Service in collaboration with staff across TU Dublin. A committee of three provides overview for funding decisions and aim to deliver a quick response as the students' needs are often immediate and pressing.

Project 3: Financial Aid - Exceptional Circumstances Fund, City Campus

Amount awarded: €3,000

For students the challenges of the pandemic include loss of part-time work and reduced income in households to job losses and illness; blended learning is a challenge for students living in busy households and there is a need for extra funding for practical items such as desks and Wi-Fi costs. The Financial Aid service manages HEA Student Assistance Fund, providing financial support to students in financial difficulty. However, some students are not eligible to apply for assistance, for example- students with high parental income on paper but who are struggling, international students, apprentices, asylum seekers etc. If successful, Financial Aid will administer a Student Assistance Fund tailored to the specific needs of those students who are not eligible to apply for funding from other HEA funded schemes.

Project 4: Electronic Laboratory Notebooks, Tallaght Campus

Amount awarded: €1,000

Chemistry research projects for final year students will be severely impacted by the current crisis, by duration and constraints that are likely to impact on the quality of project supervision. For example,

supervisors are on campus for a maximum of 2 days per week and movement into the project laboratories is restricted by distancing measures. This severely limits opportunities for supervisors to observe, train and assist their students in a face-to-face capacity. Project work provides a huge benefit to students as they work side-by-side and collaborate with supervisors to reach project goals in an apprenticeship-like model of learning which allows them to observe, practice and develop expert-level skills. The use of a digital or electronic laboratory notebook could be a relatively simple and effective solution to facilitate real-time communication between students and supervisors while also helping students working on related projects to collaborate effectively across locations.

Project 5: Labster, City Campus

Amount awarded: €3,400

The evolving Covid-19 situation has led to both the cancellation and reduction of face-to-face labs. Labster is the "World's leading provider of virtual science labs", providing access to over 3 million students worldwide. It is using gamification (3D simulations) to allow a student to engage with theoretical concepts and practical work. It enables a student to develop their conceptual understanding, learn skills needed for face-to-face labs and builds the student's confidence. Each simulation requires the student to engage with the programme by performing various activities, achieving objectives and answering questions throughout the simulation. From a lecturer standpoint, it allows the lecturer to monitor each student's progress throughout each simulation/course and see where a student or class is having difficulties. Any issues, misunderstanding or gaps in knowledge can then be addressed in lectures or tutorials.

Project 6: Career Network Addressing Inequality for Science Students from Minority Ethnic Groups, City Campus

Amount awarded: €1,000

In the School of Chemical & Pharmaceutical Sciences, there is evidence that graduates from under-represented ethnic groups have a more difficult time getting relevant employment. This observation is supported by national studies (Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market, McGinnity, Grotti, Groarke & Coughlan, 2018) which show that in Ireland, black people are much less likely to hold a managerial/professional job. The project focus is to develop career supports, including a careers toolkit that maps out career journeys for students from these diverse groups and a mentoring scheme for black and other minority ethnic students in the School of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences. The intention is to pilot these in 2020-21 and use what is learned to inform a roll-out across STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects in TU Dublin campuses.

Project 7: Crime Scene Assistance, Tallaght Campus

Amount awarded: €1,000

In response to the significant reduction in face-to-face practical classes and labs for DNA and Forensic Science students, disciplines that are highly practical, the School of Science and Computing will implement the use of Crime Scene Assistance - a forensic awareness app, developed by crime scene investigators. This app will help to focus the student on their studies, why they are studying a particular area, the impact of their actions on a crime scene, the context of their learning moving forward in college and will aid case-study and focussed discussions also. It will give them a basis to ask questions and develop their critical thinking. It will also focus discussion points and allow the

student to read through it at their own pace, in their own time and offline too increasing accessibility.

Project 8: Peer Assisted Learning Support Groups for TU Dublin Access Students

Amount awarded: €11,383 – FUNDED BY UNIVERSITY

Access Programmes encourage participation in higher education from under-represented socioeconomic groups such as mature adults, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities. For mature Access students in particular this transition to higher education comes with its own unique difficulties. There are specific risk factors associated with Access students returning to formal education including financial, psychological, academic, health and social risks. In addition to these risk factors, research has shown that due to their increased external commitments, scheduling study time can be challenging in particular for mature access students and this can impact their well-being. These challenges are hugely magnified by Covid-19 and the need to move to online delivery. Covid-19 has caused increased anxiety, social isolation, and feelings of low confidence among this group. Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Programme for Access students are sessions run by former Access students that are designed to nurture, support, tutor, advise and offer a positive learning support structure to current Access Students undertaking the computer science module. PAL sessions are small groups led by PAL leaders who are former Access students and keenly aware of the difficulties faced by Access students. These sessions typically happen out of class time, and are as much a social support as they a support to help address comprehension issues with assessments and course material. The rollout of the programme will aim to build on results shown in its pilot, including: increased confidence in Access students, an improved pass rate, increased retention and a social network that lasts through their undergraduate courses.

2021/2022 Funded Projects

Project 1: Tenjin Technology

Amount awarded: €3,000

Following the successful implementation of Tenjin Technology among accounting students on the Blanchardstown Campus in 2020/2021, further funding was awarded to expand the use of the programme to students studying management accounting and tax in Blanchardstown.

Project 2: Curriculum Optimisation Resource - using AI

Amount awarded: €11,500

Despite developments in the range of recruitment and applicant screening methodologies, the primary route for applications is the submission of a CV and cover letter. To produce a quality CV and cover letter requires research and feedback on drafts. Many students and graduates have difficulty in producing a coherent, targeted CV and cover letter for roles in which they are interested. The outcome being failure to get called for interview and thereby not having a chance to compete for the opportunity. Repeated instances can adversely impact confidence. Given the Career Development Centre has a remit to support all TU Dublin students, it is not possible to provide this level of service. Our goal is to provide an optimum level service to all. Through funding from the Student Support Fund, this CV and cover letter optimisation tool provides a very good baseline service to all students - it is self-directed and available on a 24/7 basis.

Project 3: Read and Write Software

Amount Awarded:

'Read & Write' software is a literacy support tool that offers help with everyday tasks like reading text out loud, understanding unfamiliar words, researching assignments and proofing written work. Through the TU Dublin Student Support Fund, the programme will be made available across all our public devices, computer labs and libraries in the University. Students can also upload this software to their own personal laptops. This removes the barrier of students having to disclose their challenges, where our university is taking responsibility and feeding into our commitment for Universal Design for Learning, accessibility, and mainstreaming supports for all.

Project 4: Exceptional Circumstances Fund

Amount awarded: €3,000

There are students who, through no fault of their own, need assistance to complete their course. The criteria and terms and conditions of traditional funding mechanisms can prohibit students who really need it from receiving assistance. The Exceptional Circumstances Fund is open to all students, University wide. Applying for the fund is simple, applications can be assessed quickly and payments made to students almost immediately through the Financial Aid and Accommodation banking system.