



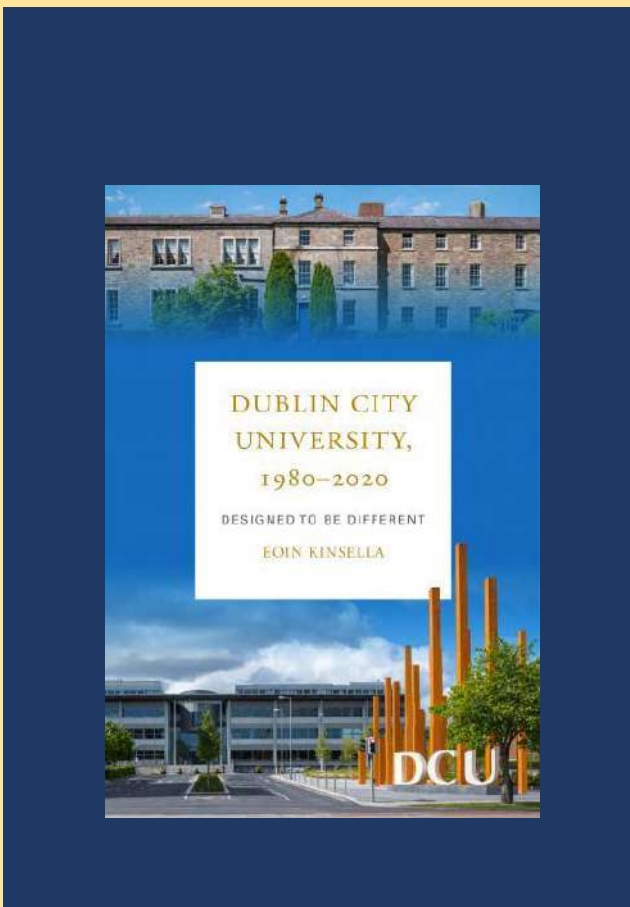
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**HERE Virtual Study Visit to
the Dublin City University
26-28 May 2021**



NEO Newsletter
June – July 2021

HERE Virtual Study Visit to the Dublin City University



On 26-28 May 2021, Turkmen HEREs took part in a Virtual Study Visit hosted by the Dublin City University (DCU) of Ireland. The theme of the seminar was “Universities and the employability agenda: strategies, student support and industry partnership”.

27 May 2021, Thursday

The Study Visit was opened by William Kelly (Deputy Registrar and Dean of Teaching & Learning, DCU – MC), Michael Gaebel (Director, Higher Education Policy, European Universities Association), Franco Burgio (Programme Manager, Executive Agency for Culture, Education and Audiovisual of the European Commission). Welcoming speech to participants was given by Professor Daire Keogh (DCU President).

Prof Daire Keogh
DCU President



Following the conference introductory speeches, Professor Liza Looney (Vice President of Academic Affairs of DCU) addressed the audience with presentation “Transforming lives and societies: DCU, a University of impact” which related to the analysis of opportunities, working strategies and the results of the DCU in the education field and graduates employability.

DCU graduates have a well-deserved reputation of highly qualified, flexible and motivated specialists with transferable, practical and technical skills required by employers.

The Graduate Outcomes Survey 2020 indicates that 95% of 2019 DCU graduates worked or continued their study 6-9 months after graduation, 3% were not available for employment (e.g., they were in travel), 2% were seeking employment. In terms of graduate employment, DCU is ranked 19th in the world and first in Ireland. (QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2020) Such solid reputation for employability gives hope to DCU students.

Prof Liza Looney
Vice President of Academic
Affairs, DCU



In 2021 the total number of university students was 18,500 (of 120 different nationalities) with accommodation for 1,243 students. DCU commitments include equality, educational opportunities, social justice, ethical behavior, and academic freedom.

Therefore, DCU studies are focused on the development of enterprise engagement strategies for the implementation of research for the social benefit.





Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering at DCU

DCU's international engagement and strategic partnerships include:

- European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) & the ECIU University
- DCU and Arizona State University (ASU). Biodesign of Europe
- Young European Research University Networks (Yerun)
- Irish Institute of India

Professor Liza Looney emphasized that DCU is responding to rapidly changing and unpredictable character of employment opportunities through collaboration with and support from the Irish industry. As an example, the DCU Alpha is an academic ecosystem that supports the growth of research-oriented companies and keeps Ireland at the forefront of global technological advancement.

Nora Trench Bowles (Head of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Quality, Irish Universities Association (IUA)) in her presentation “The Irish context: higher education, skills and employability” highlighted the following issues:

- Irish Universities Association and Irish higher education
- Ireland: population, economy, employment
- University engagement with government
- Skills and employability: graduate outcomes

According to the HEA enrolments data, Irish higher education institutions include 7 Universities (126,000





DCU Science and Research Faculty



students), 2 new (2019 and 2021) Technological Universities (with 40,500 students), 1 new (2019) University of Medicine and Health Sciences (3,800 students), 9 Institutes of Technology (50,500 students), Colleges of Education and small HEIs (7,600 students), and private HE providers.

Today Ireland is considered to be the EU's most highly educated Member State. Around 50% of persons at the age of 25-64 in Ireland have a tertiary education qualification, well ahead of 27 EU countries average at 33% (Eurostat, 2020) which is one of the key reasons of Ireland's success in attracting foreign direct investments and growing the knowledge economy.

Higher educational attainment levels are linked with higher employment rates and higher earnings. People at the age of 25-64 with a third level qualification are more than twice as likely to be employed (83%) than those with no formal education/primary education (36%).

In 2010-2016 the proportion of graduates who found employment after graduation increased gradually. Most common industries for new graduates are Wholesale & Retail, Professional & Scientific, Health & Social Work, and Education.

Elizabeth Colucci (EUA) presented "Findings from the HERE pre-survey".

Yvonne McLoughlin (Head of Service, DCU Careers Service) spoke on "A central hub for employability –





Chemical and Biological Sciences Building (inside)



Research in the Department of Engineering Design and Mathematics

DCU Careers Service”. She told about the structure and function of Careers Service, and defined the Careers Service’s approach to employability, which is based on the recognition of employability potential from the student experience, preparation to career, career mobility, and career flexibility.

Ms. McLoughlin made a review of Career Guidance & Coaching and gave practical examples from the work experience including those related to the Pandemic. She also told about the emerging trends of careers service such as consultancy, project managers, data, practitioner research, employer contacts, content creators, and content curators.

Presenting “Transforming lives through access to the workplace”, Inis Fitzpatrick (Access to the Workplace Coordinator, DCU), Professor David Collings (DCU Professor of Human Resource Management and Associate Dean for Research, DCU Business School), and Gemma Treacy (DCU Alumna) offered students the opportunity to secure a fully paid professional internship at the workplace during the summer, gaining invaluable skills to enhance their CV for future graduate roles. They also showed how this would benefit the students in the future.

In the presentation on “Embedding employability within the curriculum” Yvonne McLoughlin (Head of Service, DCU Careers Service), Elaine Daly (Careers Consultant, DCU Careers Service), Siobhan Murphy (Careers Consultant, DCU Careers Service), and Pro-





DCU Engineering on Twitter: “Design and build new technologies”



Business School: Larkin Lecture Theatre

Professor Enda McGlynn (School of Physical Sciences, DCU), gave two case studies on the topic:

- 1) Online employability series of four short courses
- 2) Embedding employability in the physics curriculum

Friday, 28 May 2021:

“Industry collaboration & co-creation – the DCU Business School experience” was presented by Professor Yseult Freeney (Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, DCU Business School) and Mr Eoghan Stack (Director of Commercial Business Development, DCU Business School). They spoke on the problems of industry engagement (DCU Business School: industry collaboration, industry advisory board service, industry stakeholders, university models, and innovation tools). As one of the examples they considered the case in focus: a new MSc Insights & Innovation award for a new challenge in the Irish food & drinks sector.

The presentation on “Autism and employability” (workshop format) was brought by Susan Madigan (Senior Occupational Therapist, DCU Disability & Learning Support Service) and Fiona Earley (Autism Friendly University Coordinator, DCU). They told about DCU Autism Friendly Project (AFP) and their activities. They described the varieties of barriers in the workplace for autistic individuals and tried to





show possible solutions.

The presentation focused on the interesting aspect of autism in Ireland: 85% of people with autism are unemployed or partially unemployed, despite the wide range of their talents, skills, and abilities. This high unemployment rate leads to their isolation, increasing their mental health problems, and loss of independence, poverty and unfavorable social conditions. For this reason, one of the principles of the DCU AFP is to increase their employment opportunities. Graduates, through a range of initiatives, are helped to develop their soft skill supporting their development from university to workplace.

The presentation “Structured Mentorship Programme: Connecting graduates with second year students” was given by Yvonne McLoughlin and Ross Munnely (Director of Alumni Relations, DCU). The essence of this programme is:

- Mentoring the second year students is carried out by DCU graduates
- It is focused on individuals, their professional and career development
- Meetings and connections are organized between graduates and employers who can offer support to students for developing their career ideas, clarifying goals and improving their employability.

The presentation “Remote working and remote internships – learning from our response to the global pandemic” was delivered by Maeve Long (Head of





Undergraduate Humanities and Social Sciences, DCU



DCU: LEGO Education Innovation Studio

Service & Programme Coordinator, DCU INTRA Internships), Paul Bester (IT Manager, General Motors), and Rhiannon Bradley (Student (MA in Biomedical Engineering)).

They told how they negotiated with employers to ensure vacancies relevant for areas of study, and how they constantly changed and enlarged database of employers. “General Motors” company was one of such employers.

They showed that in the case of remote working and internships, students could gain:

- Increased employment opportunities
- Application and enhancing of technical skills
- Establishing a network of contacts
- International travel opportunity for some students (in 2019 7% of students worked in 21 countries outside of Ireland).

Speakers also exposed what benefits the industry might have:

- Efficient and free recruitment process
- Wide possibilities for graduate training programmes
- Guaranteed hiring of those who applied first
- Raising awareness among students about industrial companies
- Feedback to programmes and projects through meetings with academic staff, participation in annual projects, feedback to students when they are finally placed in the workplace, feedback





Lecture on Policy, Practice and the Law, DCU



School of Law and Government

during questionnaires, curriculum feedback.

Rhiannon Bradley, 3d-year student (MA in Biomedical Engineering), in his presentation showed how “SCRI-IS Technologies Ltd” company (experts in ECO’s, elastomer change outs in biopharmaceutical industry) successfully used INTRA Placement strategy in their work /ECO – Elastomer Change out: Replacement of soft parts, polymers/plastics, within biopharmaceutical manufacturing systems.

The presentation “Microcredentials – in the service of big ideas” (in the workshop format) was presented by Dr Mairéad Nic Ghiolla Mhicíl (National Institute for Digital Learning, DCU), and Dr Lynn Ramsey (HCI Multi-Campus Micro-Credentials Project Manager, Irish Universities Association). It was about replacing traditional educational model for the benefits of industrial needs. Industrial companies offer alternative learning options trying to re-shape post-secondary education. Their system of microcredentials is based on a short-term education for certain industrial purposes.

DCU Micro-Credential Values provide for:

Student Focused – satisfaction, relevance, value, with UX and iterative redesign based upon student feedback

Institutional Value – stakeholder engagement, investment and participation, including holistic and sustainable integration with distinct elements of institutional strategy





DCU, Art in the Engineering building



Academic Quality – vigorous maintenance of internal/external QA standards, logical and clear linking to existing offerings, academically-informed and validated learning design

Diversification – unbundling and promoting diverse, credible learning pathways for diverse learners, expansion of strategic relationships to include industry/societal partners

Societal Benefit – learning for new purposes, expanding student participation, enabling and empowering learning while working, retiring, job seeking or reskilling.

Presentation “DCU Futures – preparation of our graduates for a rapidly-evolving and unpredictable future” was delivered by Dr Blánaid White (Dean for Strategic Learning Innovation, DCU), and Dr Ciarán Dunne, (Transversal Skills Programme Director, DCU).

The speakers emphasized the fact that the 4th Industrial Revolution would increasingly influence on all sectors: lives, careers, industries and societies. Automation would be predicted to replace up to 800 million jobs by 2030. Career mobility could become increasingly frequent. Covid-19 had influenced on accelerating trends rather than created.

Higher education should also be ready for significant disruption. In order to ensure graduates to be future-capable, DCU representatives should confirm that their university would be future-capable. “DCU





DCU teachers' virtual visit to CERN (EU Organization for Nuclear Research, the world's largest research community)



DCU Teacher Internship Programme within STEM industry (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

Futures” project proposes a radical change in the curricula embracing the value system to be deliberately different and innovative: “The next evolution is in **what** the students will learn, transforming **how** the students learn, embedding the transversal skills to thrive.”

New areas of study proposed by “DCU Futures” are the following:

- Data/Technology Infused World
- Zero Carbon Economy
- Sustainable Society
- Employable graduates with human-centric discipline skills

“DCU Futures” proposes innovative pedagogy & assessment:

- challenge based learning
- engagement with industry
- immersive learning experience
- online learning
- virtual laboratories

“DCU Futures’ offers transversal skills pathway, responding to the increase in career mobility, the value of inter-disciplinarity and the need for exceptionally employable graduates, who can operate effectively across multiple domains and differentiate themselves from automation and artificial intelligence.

The Seminar conclusions were made by Dr Howard Davies, Senior Advisor, European Universities Association. He indicated the key benefits of the present-





ed projects and their useful aspects for the improvement of higher educational systems and QA (Quality Assurance) in higher education. He also attracted the audience attention to present and future challenges in the higher education sphere.

Closing remarks were made by Franco Burgio (EACEA) and Professor Liza Looney (DCU).

Professor Liza Looney gave special attention to the fact that the Dublin City University was established in 1980 during the **economic recession** to address acute shortage of Irish graduates technological skills. Therefore the emphasis was made **on applied studies and also on research, on anticipating and meeting industry, and business needs for graduates, while accelerating economic and social development.**

DCU was moving to a modularized approach of education as key drivers showing “flexibility to serve industry-based learners and learner choice”. Preparing students for their future activities was the main guiding principle, and innovative curriculum has remained DCU’s hallmark throughout the DCU history.

The novelty of this approach was based on commercialization of educational programmes, spin-offs and licenses, student entrepreneurship, industry funded research, student placements, and accelerating Irish startups.

The virtual study visit was very informative and valuable for its participants. The materials of this seminar





DCU Glasnevin Campus

will be used in the work on improving the quality of higher education.

Main lessons learned:

1. The most important issue now, in light of the global pandemic challenges, is re-thinking the university contribution to training approaches of their university graduates and the graduates' current and future employability; however, they should not be solved by ways used in the previous epoch.
2. Universities and their stakeholders should focus on the applied training of future specialists and the development of their research skills which are especially significant to meet the industry and business advancement as well as to accelerate the socio-economic development of the society.
3. Development of students' transversal skills should be included in the universities life-learning strategies. In order to cope with challenges, graduates need to be equipped with a broad set of competences instead of fixed skills to adapt to the environment and 21st century difficulties. Transversal competences will function as building blocks for alumnae's further learning and career development.
4. Universities should find possible solutions in providing an opportunity for vocational learning and personal development particularly valuable for disabled students. Promoting inclusion can effect massive social changes.





5. Higher education institutions should be ready for significant disruption. In order to ensure graduates to be future-capable, micro-credentials (shorter forms of learning opportunities) should be developed as more flexible, learner-centered forms of education and training particularly useful for those who want to develop professionally after starting work and for the benefits of industrial needs.*

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