

SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Project 1 – Tenjin Technology

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 constantly engage and ask questions and develop self-learning skills. Tenjin technology is a web-based software application that supports accounting and finance teaching and learning, enabling 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 developed for deployment in Moodle. Tenjin will aid in revision for students while helping students/lecturers to identify areas of weakness and provides questions and solutions to users in many forms, including MCQ's, quizzes, short and long questions.

Project 2 – The Eileen Fitzpatrick Fund

Amount awarded: €5,000

COVID-19 has impacted many students, presenting 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 an overview for funding decisions aiming to respond quickly as the students' needs are often immediate and pressing.

Project 3 – Financial Aid - Exceptional Circumstances Fund

Amount awarded: €3,000

For students, the pandemic challenges include losing part-time work and reduced income in households to job losses and illness; blended learning is a challenge for students living in busy homes.

There is a need for extra funding for practical items such as desks and Wi-Fi costs. The Financial Aid service manages the 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

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 affect project supervision quality. 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 apprenticeshiplike learning model, which allows them to observe, practice, and develop expert-level skills. Using 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

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 uses gamification (3D simulations) to allow a student to engage with theoretical concepts and practical work. It enables students to develop their conceptual understanding, learn skills needed for face-to-face labs, and build 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

Amount awarded: €1,000

In the School of Chemical & Pharmaceutical Sciences, there is evidence that graduates from underrepresented 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 black people are much less likely in Ireland to hold a managerial/professional job. The project focuses on developing 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 rollout across STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects in TU Dublin.

Project 7 – Crime Scene Assistance

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 allow them to ask questions and

develop their critical thinking. It will also concentrate discussion points and enable 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 for mature access students, impacting their well-being. These challenges are hugely magnified by COVID-19 and the need to move to online delivery. The pandemic has caused increased anxiety, social isolation, and feelings of low confidence among this group.

The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Programme for Access students are sessions run by former Access students 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. They are as much a social support as they support help address comprehension issues with assessments and course material. The programme's rollout 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.