

The Technological University in Ireland, Leading by Example

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Abstract

In April 2018, Dublin Institute of Technology, the Institute of Technology Tallaght and the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, applied for designation as a Technological University. If successful, this would create Ireland's first Technological University. This presents an opportunity to define the meaning of a Technological University in Ireland. It presents an opportunity to develop education modes that present alternatives to the one-size-fits-all model of academic provision that has defined the sector since the establishment of the state. This paper explores the opportunities to embed work-based learning and skills training as a core part of the new style of University in Ireland.



History of Dublin Institute of Technology

- ▶ **1842** First Engineering Degree in Ireland (Trinity)
- ▶ **1887** First College of Technology in Ireland, later DIT.
- ▶ **1967** Regional Technical Colleges established
- ▶ **1993** DIT Established by combination of several Colleges of Technology
- ▶ **1996** DIT Granted Awarding powers up to NFQ Level 10 (PhD)
- ▶ **2018** DIT Applies for designation as Technological University



Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs)

- ▶ Proposed as Second Level (age 12-17) Vocational Schools
- ▶ Upgraded to Third Level Colleges before they launched
- ▶ Later designated Institutes of Technology
- ▶ Athlone, Cork, Dundalk, Galway, DunLaoghaire, Blanchardstown, Carlow, Sligo, Tallaght, Tralee, Letterkenny, Limerick, Waterford



The TU Apprenticeship & Skills Strategy Strategic Considerations

- ▶ The Technological University will embody a strong understanding of the changing needs of the economy, both in terms of short-term fluctuations and longer-term evolution of individuals, business and enterprise
- ▶ TU will reflect and give expression to a connectedness and understanding of national employment needs
- ▶ TU will provide an education environment that keeps pace with society's needs by prioritising student progression at all levels
- ▶ TU will support not only individual students but also industry sectors and society as whole to adapt to changing educational and economic conditions



The TU Apprenticeship & Skills Strategy Strategic Considerations

- ▶ TU should not cause confusion by using the words apprentice, or apprenticeship other than in the narrow contexts defined in the review
- ▶ TU must position itself to successfully respond to competitive calls for proposals in new skill areas. This will require the ability for TU to respond quickly and flexibly
- ▶ Progression pathways should be defined for all new apprenticeships, into other TU4Dublin programmes
- ▶ New apprentice programmes should fit comfortably on a spectrum of TU programmes with defined work elements
- ▶ New apprentice programmes should be designed using flexible modules and flexible delivery methods



The TU Apprenticeship & Skills Strategy Strategic Considerations

- ▶ Cooperation with state bodies and with industry partners who already have strong in-house training and education programmes, is essential.
- ▶ Committing to the new apprentice model, will afford TU the opportunity to re-think how it will interact with industry and develop multi-level, and diverse industry links
- ▶ With regard to academic planning, apprenticeship should be integrated within the normal academic planning cycle and processes, and should not sit outside or beyond any TU planning



The Continuum From Short Skills Programmes to Academic Research.

- ▶ Apprenticeship & Skills offerings will exist within a continuum that includes a range of offerings, including short programmes, work-based learning, part-time programmes, etc. on the full spectrum of offerings that are central to a TU
- ▶ The TU will be differentiated from other providers by the range of learning styles and experiences supported and by the mobility between those journeys that it provides



Embedding Apprenticeship & Skills experiences within the TU

- ▶ All TU students will have access to and can take advantage of the technical facilities and expertise unique to the TU, some of which are resourced from national funds for apprenticeship
- ▶ Such facilities are a national and a TU resource, and must be exploited for the greatest benefit of all of TU students and the benefit of society as a whole



Embedding Apprenticeship & Skills experiences within the TU

- ▶ Students at all levels and in all disciplines will be encouraged, by way of suitable projects, collaborative learning opportunities, access to facilities etc., to interact in a meaningful manner with peers across disciplines and other programmes at all levels
- ▶ In support of this, the physical design of the institute and facilities will be such as to prevent the development of homogeneous in-groups that do not interact with the widest range of activities in the institute



Progression & Transfer within the TU

- ▶ The TU will strive to provide an education environment that keeps pace with society's needs by prioritising student progression at all levels, allowing not only individual students but also industry sectors and society as whole to adapt to changing educational and economic conditions
- ▶ Progression, mobility and articulation mechanisms and routes will be developed to allow apprenticeship and skills students to undertake a route through the spectrum of TU educational opportunities which best supports their careers objectives



Progression & Transfer within the TU

- ▶ TU recognises and supports the development of New Apprenticeships including at degree level, to give students the greatest possible range of options that suit the career aspirations and learning styles of the student



Earn & Learn Mobility as an encompassing trait of the TU

- ▶ A fundamental characteristic of the TU graduate, at any level, should be that they know **how** to do things, because they have had the opportunity to develop and practice their knowledge in the “real world”
- ▶ TU will embody a commitment to build a pervasive work-based learning ecosystem, as a primary component of all programmes, along with international study and work opportunities in the programmes offered at the TU
- ▶ TU recognises the attractiveness of apprenticeship and skills programmes for many learners



Earn & Learn Mobility as an encompassing trait of the TU

- ▶ A “Learn as you earn model” is attractive to many students, not only to provide income but to make higher education economically feasible in many cases
- ▶ The learning style of an apprenticeship suits many students over more traditional undergraduate education
- ▶ Apprenticeship can enhance the work readiness and maturity of many students
- ▶ Most students do not start to consider their career skills until about Semester 7 on a four year programme
- ▶ In contrast students enrolled on any apprenticeship programme need to consider their career skills before the start of Semester One as their first step is to find a job with a suitable employer



Technological University for Dublin: Timeline

- ▶ **Proposal:** 27th April 2018
- ▶ **Review:** International Panel of 4 appointed, review took place Monday 28th May to Thursday 31st May 2018
- ▶ **Decision:** June 2018
- ▶ **Designation:** 1st September 2018
- ▶ **Foundation:** September 2018 - September 2020



What is a Technological University? How are we different?

- ▶ Our origins lie in the trades
- ▶ We are not exclusively involved in the trades
- ▶ But we are still very much involved involved and a driver in this area
- ▶ The opportunity exists to define a new style of institution, for Ireland, that supports and promotes a variety of modes of learning
- ▶ Our Technological University so, is one where diverse learning styles are supported at all stages of our partners' careers development



Any Questions?

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