



Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



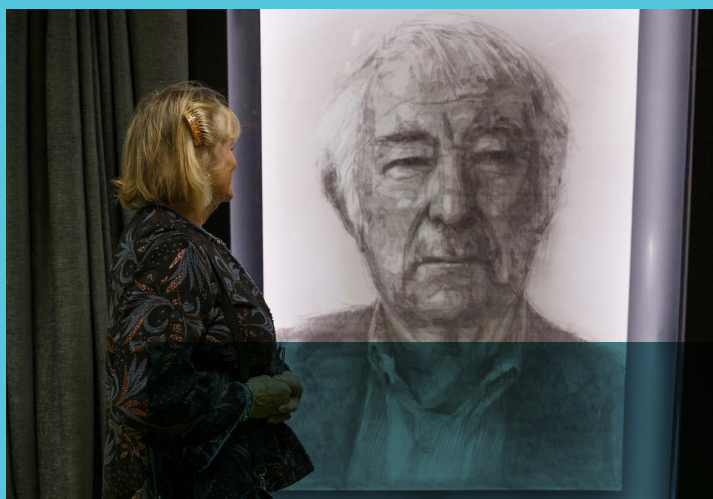
DCU Arts and Culture Plan

2020 - 2022



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‘Take Off From Here’

Seamus Heaney, Station Island

Introduction by the President

I am delighted to introduce DCU's first Arts and Culture Plan 2020-2022, which has its origins in the Dublin City University Strategic Plan 2017-22: Talent, Discovery and Transformation.¹

The aim of this plan is to provide a framework for the development and integration of Arts and Culture in the life and future of DCU and its neighbouring communities. It acknowledges the inspiring array of arts and cultural activity already taking place, and seeks to build on the achievements of a network of dedicated individuals, partnerships and programmes delivered across the University to date.

Arts and Culture have a role to play in promoting our University's distinct identity. This plan charts a new arts and cultural perspective for DCU moving forward. Its purpose is to provide a cohesive vision, roadmap and conditions for Arts and Culture to flourish at DCU in the future. It endeavours to stimulate creative potential, unlock talent, embrace diversity and promote innovative collaborations across the University and with neighbouring communities.

At the core of this plan is an emphasis on effective planning, capacity building and the establishment of best practice. This will allow DCU to capitalise on the strategic opportunities arising from new cultural relationships and to develop new approaches to collaboration with partners.

Many case studies around the world are testament to the profound impact artists and cultural projects can have on communities and organisations. Imagine creating a situation in DCU where arts programmes and exchanges were not occasional interventions but part of business as usual, integrating them into the fabric of the university and its long term vision!

While this plan is being introduced at an unprecedented time, due to the regrettable reality of the Covid 19 virus, the importance of Arts and Culture has become emphatically obvious. At a fundamental level it has the power to inspire, offer hope and bring people together. It is important that this vision rises above the current challenges, maintains a long-term strategic focus, and provides the best pathways possible for moving forward within current resource constraints.

As President of DCU, I am fully committed to strengthening and deepening the role of Arts and Culture across the University. DCU puts people first and recognises the fundamental importance of human creativity and cultural expression for the development of a sustainable and thriving University community.

Arts and Culture play an important part in achieving the ambition of the Our DCU staff initiative, with its vision for the University as "a welcoming, diverse community where people and ideas thrive".

I would like to thank a number of people for their significant contribution to drawing up this new plan for DCU. Firstly, I wish to thank and acknowledge the members of the Working Group who were responsible for drafting the **Proposals for Implementing the Arts and Culture Strategy** document - namely, Derek Hand (Chair), Roisin Blunnie, Sile Denvir, Michael Hinds, Sharon McArdle, Mary Shine Thompson and Deirdre Wynter. I would also like to thank Marcella Bannon and Tom Swift who worked with the original document to develop and produce DCU's first Arts and Culture Plan.



Prof Daire Keogh
President of DCU



Foreword

There is no question but that we live in interesting times. In the midst of global uncertainty and anxiety, we are all being forced to reconsider what we genuinely value. Arts and Culture have always played an important role in Irish society generally and in Higher Education particularly. Now, more than ever, it is in the realm of creativity and in our responses to the creative arts that we might discover ways of understanding ourselves and better understand the world in which we live. Music, film, theatre, visual art and literature help us to cope and come to terms with our changing circumstances. So even when we are obliged to be apart, art has the capacity to bring us together.

Not only does artistic expression give us solace in times of adversity, but it also reminds us of humanity's innate imaginative drive, of our creativity, our spirit of innovation and our positivity. For that reason, I believe that Arts and Culture will have an even more significant role to play in DCU's evolution, as we reimagine, develop and refine many aspects of university life.

For students, the arts can enrich their University experience in so many exciting ways. Artistic engagement offers new approaches to exploring and explaining the world around us and allows us to see the world from new and challenging perspectives. Art also creates a framework for making valuable connections with others, bringing people together from different places and disciplines, with the shared goal of creating and experiencing something new. Participation in the arts also teaches a variety of valuable skills such as team-building, communication, resilience and, of course, creativity.

As the plan suggests, we must 'place art and culture at the centre of planning efforts - integrating it across a wide range of communal spaces'. Through its growing Visual Arts collection, DCU has already shown how such spaces are enlivened and beautified. There are also ample opportunities to animate the University's unique heritage and architecture with arts and cultural activities.

DCU's cultural development is not just for the benefit of the University community. We must be a resource that helps to grow art creation and participation across the North Dublin region. In this way, we can increase engagement and harness the potential presented by the arts for deepening our long-standing engagement with our neighbouring communities.

Placing the arts at the heart of the University is a process that will demand further long term planning and investment. The creation and implementation of DCU's first Arts and Culture Plan will be hugely important in creating a foundation for this work.

The plan does not and cannot stand in isolation. It is a framework which must be delivered across and embedded into DCU through its five Faculties, Schools, professional units, and its student body. Its priorities must be consistent with the ambitions of the University's Strategic Plan and reflect DCU's expressed intent to be known as an engaged university with a broad range of stakeholders and local communities.

Prof Derek Hand
DCU School of English

Chair of the Arts and Culture
Strategy Working Group



DCU Arts and Culture: Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

To make Arts and Culture central to the advancement of the University

Mission

To integrate Arts and Culture into the life and future of DCU

By the end of 2022, we work towards:

- Building institutional capacity to embed Arts and Culture across the University, through ANAM and other key initiatives
- Inspiring and challenging our DCU community to make an impact on society via artistic and cultural activities
- Establishing 2-3 key strategic partnerships
- Developing a coherent Arts and Culture brand and communications plan
- Deepening our dialogue and partnerships with local artistic communities in North Dublin

DCU Arts and Culture: Overview

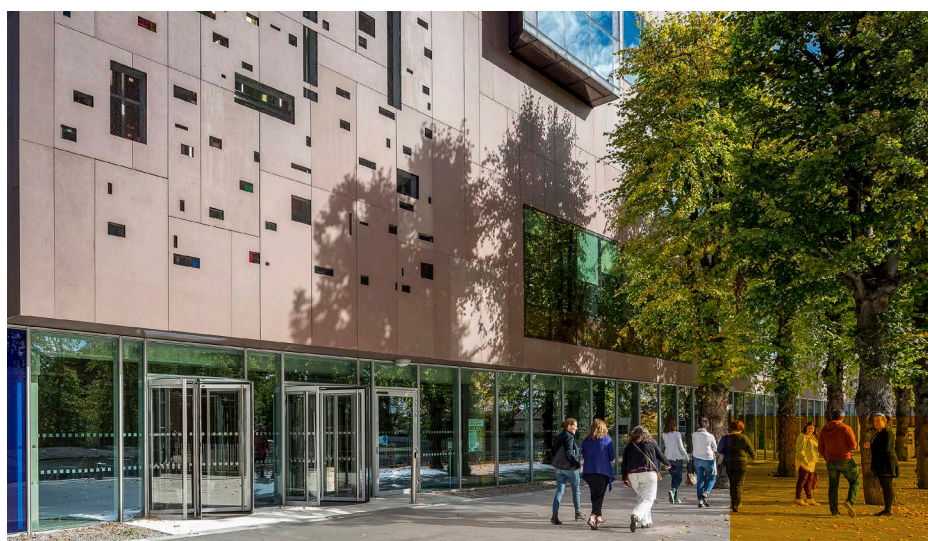
Rich History

DCU has a long history of Arts and Culture engagement that is built on the creativity and exceptional talent of our University community and productive connections with the wider artistic landscape. It is supported by the University's excellent built infrastructure and resources. In 2016, DCU's arts and cultural resources were significantly increased through its incorporation with St Patrick's College Drumcondra, the Church of Ireland College of Education and the Mater Dei Institute of Education. The University also acquired the magnificent All Hallows campus.

Arts and Culture Resources

Dublin City University has a wide range of human and physical resources which underpin its Arts and Culture activities. Many of our activities in this space would not be possible without the support provided by DCU Educational Trust. In broadest terms, our key Arts and Culture resources include:

- A vibrant and culturally active student population
- A talented staff community that includes renowned artists and members of Aosdána
- Three academic campuses possessing a variety of historic and culturally significant buildings e.g. All Hallows Chapel, Belvedere House, Albert College
- The Helix, DCU's award-winning multi-purpose venue
- The Cregan and O'Reilly Libraries



Arts and Culture in DCU Academic Programmes

DCU's richness and its particular strengths in music, literature and drama are remarkable. Across Faculties and Schools, at undergraduate and postgraduate level, DCU's commitment to Arts and Culture in the educational sphere is extensive. Academic programmes and initiatives include:

- Bachelor of Religious Education and Music, BA in Jazz and Contemporary Music Performance, BA Joint Honours includes a Music option
- MA in Creative Writing, MA in Choral Studies, MA in Contemporary Screen Industries
- Arts education modules - drama, visual arts and physical movement, as well creativity and imagination in education - offered through the School of Arts Education and Movement
- BSc in Multimedia and an MSc in Emerging Media, School of Communications
- Creative elective options offered in the Arts and Health module, delivered through the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health
- Credit-bearing extracurricular activities, including engagement in Arts and Culture via the Uaneen Module, offered through the Office of Student Life
- The DCU-Berklee College of Music Pathway programme. This provides students who have been accepted to Berklee College of Music the opportunity to study music performance at DCU and transfer their credits to Berklee
- DCU's Age Friendly University Initiative offers non-credit bearing modules in Life Writing

DCU Library

The University's O'Reilly and Cregan Libraries play an important role in developing arts and culture, including:

- Presenting touring exhibitions
- Hosting readings and talks
- Curating DCU's annual Culture Night event
- Commissioning new artwork

The Special Collections and Archives directorate (O'Reilly Library) holds internationally significant collections and archives in modern Irish media history, politics and society. It also has a wide range of rare books and manuscripts, unique collections relating to the history of education in Ireland, and various personal libraries and archives.

A partnership agreement between the Irish Jesuit Province and DCU will see the transfer of its renowned Milltown Park Library Collection in 2020 to a new library located in Woodlock Hall on the All Hallows' campus. This collection is rich in terms of classical, and contemporary theological subjects.

Visual Arts

DCU boasts a modest yet admirable art collection which began in the early 1990's as a result of the dedication and legacy of a number of staff. This has grown in recent years with strategic partnerships and long term loan acquisitions from national and private collections. The appointment of a Visual Arts Development Officer in 2018 has brought great momentum to this area with the introduction of new policy as well as an increased programme of long-term loans. It is also supported by the DCU Educational Trust, which plays an important role in developing the university's art collection and public art realm through philanthropic support and generous donations.

DCU ANAM - Arts and Culture Engagement and Development

In 2018, DCU established ANAM, a flagship annual Arts and Culture festival featuring some of the University's most talented students and staff, along with a number of leading artists, musicians and writers in the region.

The festival was curated by the renowned South Wind Blows (creators of Other Voices) under the direction of Philip King (DCU Adjunct Professor). The festival's chief aims were:

- Nurture and celebrate Arts and Culture at DCU
- Strengthen DCU's links with its local communities
- Provide a platform for arts-focussed student societies and staff members
- Broaden arts access through collaborations with Fighting Words, DCU Age-Friendly University initiative, the MELLIE project, Axis Theatre and others

In 2020, the decision was made to embed the festival within a programme of year-round events, with a refined focus on encouraging and supporting community-engaged Arts and Culture activities on DCU campuses and in surrounding communities in support of DCU's intention to develop further as an important cultural hub. As part of the new model, in 2020, funding grants were made available for staff and student-led arts initiatives and events, to promote a more organic and community-driven flourishing of cultural activities.

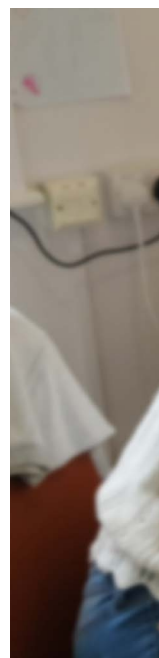
Research Activities

DCU's research community is engaged in a range of activities related to Arts and Culture. Other research areas being addressed by DCU researchers include:

- Choral Practice
- Arts and Education
- Arts and Health
- The Creative Schools initiative
- Music and Enterprise
- Arts and Technology

Student-led Activities

DCU has a wide selection of student clubs and societies dedicated to Arts and Culture. These include: Trad Soc, Drama Soc, the Indian Soc, Arts and Culture Soc, the Gospel Choir, Creative Writing Soc, Dance Soc, Harry Potter Soc and Circus Arts Soc. The Office of Student Life also offers annual arts bursaries for students supported by DCU Educational Trust.



Artists in Residence

Over the years, DCU has hosted many Artist in Residence programmes fostering an understanding of the value of the arts and creativity across disciplines. The annual *Scribhneoir Cónaithe Gaeilge* (Irish Language Writer in Residence), located in Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge, has featured many celebrated writers in partnership with the Arts Council including most recently, writer **Ciara Ní É.** Notable residencies in recent years include:

Fidelio Trio (2012) took up its inaugural residency with the School of Music, a relationship which has developed and transformed over the years into an annual Winter Festival at Belvedere House.

CoisCéim Dance Theatre (2013) fulfilled a three year residency in the School of Art Education and Movement.

Playwright Marina Carr (2014) was appointed the inaugural John McGahern Writer in Residence in 2014, based between the Department of English and the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies (SALIS).

Composer Colm Ó Foghlú (2019) was appointed Artist in Residence in the context of Primary Education.

Mandy O'Neill and Joanna Hopkins (2019) DCU's first Visual Artists in Residence, based in studios on All Hallows campus.

Fiona McDonald (2020) was appointed as DCU's first Artist in Residence in Technology and Innovation, located in Talent Garden at DCU Alpha.

Irish Language

DCU is committed to promoting and teaching Irish. The Irish language is a core part of our shared cultural heritage and the DCU Irish Language Strategy (*Straitéis na Gaeilge*) will be developed separately but will remain aligned to our strategic Arts and Culture goals.



Strategic Objectives

DCU's Arts and Culture plan 2020-2022 places an emphasis on nurturing arts, creativity and culture across the University. A consultation process began in 2017 with both internal and external stakeholders, the output of which helped inform the following 4 objectives:

- 1 **Build Capacity**
Secure resources, develop infrastructure and create robust and ambitious policy
- 2 **Develop Partnerships**
Deepen relationships and strengthen strategic partnerships with a view to ensuring the sustainability of Arts and Culture in DCU
- 3 **Enhance Experience**
Enrich the arts and cultural experience for staff, students and local communities
- 4 **Create Opportunities**
Increase engagement, harness potential and enrich public appreciation for Arts and Culture



1. Build Capacity

Secure resources, develop infrastructure and create robust and ambitious policy.

Key Actions

- i Establish an Cultural Arts Office with the appointment of a full time Cultural Arts Officer
- ii Conduct an inventory of the university's existing arts and cultural assets, and identify key priority areas with dedicated budgets
- iii Explore a variety of sustainable public and private funding models/partnerships
- iv Develop key strategies and policies necessary to advance a shared vision and to ensure effective and strategic implementation of this plan

2. Develop Partnerships

Deepen relationships and strengthen strategic partnerships with a view to ensuring the sustainability of Arts and Culture in DCU.

Key Actions

- i Develop strategic and funding partnerships where appropriate; with Cultural Agencies, Government Departments, National and International Cultural Funders, EU Funding programmes and National Arts Institutions
- ii Position DCU as a lead driver for arts and cultural development in North Dublin through effective engagement with neighbouring communities
- iii Collaborate with organisations on a select number of national programmes e.g. Culture Night, Bealtaine etc.
- iv Work with internal stakeholders to integrate Arts and Culture into relevant programmes, policies, committees and plans

3. Enhance Experience

Enrich the arts and cultural experience for staff, students and local communities.

Key Actions

- i Work with relevant internal stakeholders to place art and culture at the centre of planning efforts - integrating it across a wide range of communal spaces including outdoor, indoor and digital realms
- ii Develop a public art programme which is in line with the public art policy for the University considering loans, acquisitions, site specific commissions and a sculpture trail
- iii Capitalise on DCU's location and proximity to the city centre, as an accessible and attractive location and resource for Arts and Culture in the North Dublin region
- iv Promote DCU's Arts and Culture activities as an integral part of the DCU's transformative student experience

4. Create Opportunities

Increase engagement, harness potential and enrich public appreciation for Arts and Culture.

Key Actions

- i Pilot and implement a programme of art and culture supports, opportunities and events for DCU's communities to research, create and present work. i.e. ANAM, open calls, bursaries
- ii Explore the viability and develop the groundwork for the integration of a series of modules in Arts and Culture via taught, hybrid and online methodologies
- iii Cultivate residency opportunities for artists to make work and to explore the intersections between the arts and specialist research areas
- iv Seek opportunities to commission work relevant to DCU's specific communities

Implementation

This is a high level statement of intent, and the detail of how it is achieved will be outlined in actions arising from the plan. It is driven by the Cultural Arts Office of DCU under the auspices of the President's Office. An Arts and Culture Committee will be established to oversee the delivery of this plan. This group will meet on a quarterly basis to review how key milestones/outcomes are being delivered.

DCU Educational Trust will play an important role in achieving the objectives of the plan. This builds on the Trust's track record of developing productive relationships with both enterprise and philanthropic donors that have added greatly to the University's cultural assets. This experience underlines the importance of building partnerships and communicating DCU's Arts and Culture objectives. Such relationships are invaluable for both enriching the physical environment of our campuses and creating new cultural opportunities for the DCU community.

Evaluation

Measures for success of this plan will be framed from a baseline research study which will be carried out across the University in Spring, 2021. This study will provide stakeholder analysis in relation to the four key objectives as well as exploring issues such as diversity and access. Quarterly reports will be produced.



Footnotes

¹The Arts and Culture Plan will run until 2022 as it is devised as a 'bridging' plan that will bring us to the conclusion of the University's Strategic Plan 2017-2022. It is envisaged that from 2022, the new DCU Arts and Culture Strategy will be aligned with the 5-year time frame of the University's Strategic Plan.

Purposefully different,
consistently excellent





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