

Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project – Student Partner Programme
- Trinity Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office

Learning in Trinity during COVID-19

Commenced in October 2020, the mandate of **Trinity Inclusive Curriculum (Trinity-INC) Project** is to embed principles of diversity, equality and inclusion across all curricula at Trinity College Dublin.

The **Trinity-INC Student Partner Programme** engages collaboratively with Trinity students from all walks of life and communities which are commonly underrepresented and/or disadvantaged in higher education, to learn from their experience of inclusion and exclusion within the curriculum at Trinity College Dublin, to inform and shape Trinity-INC's work and direction.

We recently asked our Student Partners to reflect on Trinity's response to COVID-19. Here is what they had to say.

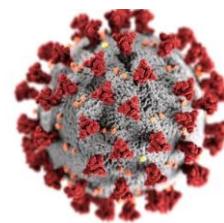
Trinity's response during COVID-19 lockdown / restrictions:

Common positives:

- Take home online open-book exams lessened pressure and allowed the students to better demonstrate their learning
- No commuting / less burdensome financially.

Common barriers:

- Lack of structure / motivation
- Difficulty accessing online sources (particularly on computers from outside TCD)
- Inconsistency between lecturers' approaches and consideration for individual circumstances (lack of standardisation; training needed for lecturers)
- Limited or no access to the library
- Conflicting communication from centralised College platforms
- Lack of social interactions
- General anxiety surrounding the pandemic



Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project – Student Partner Programme
- Trinity Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office

Learning in Trinity during COVID-19

Trinity's transition back to full capacity / hybrid models:

Key takeaways:

- Students are eager to be back in person but also apprehensive.
- College communication considered often ineffective and conflictual.

It was agreed that there needs to be a degree of standardisation, but this needs to be balanced with consideration for those with long commutes, or other responsibilities and for those who are at risk.

In College, lack of social distancing and questionable mask-wearing standards has made the transition for those who may be at risk or immunocompromised quite difficult, raising questions for the students, such as: 'Why not implement social distancing where it can be implemented?' and 'Do TCD have to follow government guidelines, or can they implement safety measures themselves?'

Students identified the 'hyflex' model* as a potentially crucial tool to overcoming some of these issues, and recognised the connections between it and elements of UDL. Students felt it would support student engagement, lessen worries, and also allow students to take more responsibility to stay at home when experiencing Covid-19-like symptoms.

**HyFlex is a course design model that presents the components of hybrid learning in a flexible course structure that gives students the option of attending sessions in the classroom, participating online, or doing both. Students can change their mode of attendance weekly or by topic, according to need or preference.*

<https://www.niu.edu/kepteaching/resources/hyflex-course-model.shtml>

Learn more about the Trinity-INC Project and the Student Partner Programme:

<https://www.tcd.ie/equality/projects/inclusive-curriculum/StudentPartnerProgramme.php>