



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity disAbility Service Journey 1995-2025



Executive Summary

This publication marks 25 years of the Trinity disAbility Service - from its origins in 1995 to its role today as a national and international leader in inclusive education.

It documents key milestones, from the founding of the Special Needs Committee and the launch of the Inclusive Curriculum, to the redesign of Front Square for universal access and the opening of the Trinity disAbility Hub in Printing House Square.

The timeline showcases the Service's growth, innovation, and student-led change, highlighting projects like the TCD Sense, and the Inclusive Internship Programme. Student registrations have grown from 64 in 1995 to nearly 3,000 in 2025.

The final section looks ahead, introducing the Ability, Inclusion & Belonging Action Plan 2025–2030, which sets out a bold vision to embed access and inclusion across all areas of university life.

Foreword

By Linda Doyle,
Provost and President
Trinity College Dublin



I am absolutely delighted to congratulate the Trinity disAbility Service on reaching this significant milestone. Celebrating 25 years of impact offers a moment to reflect on all that has been accomplished - and to reaffirm our commitment to fostering an ever more inclusive College community in the years ahead.

What began as a service focused on individual support has grown into a powerful catalyst for change: reshaping systems, language, and attitudes across Trinity. The disAbility Service has prompted all of us - especially university leadership - to place accessibility and inclusion at the heart of our work. This is no small undertaking on a historic campus like ours, where legacy infrastructure often presents real challenges.

Initiatives such as the Trinity Ability Co_op, the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum, TCD Sense, Trinity Neurodivergent Project and the Inclusive Internship Programme reflect the Service's commitment to innovation, evidence-based practice, and the meaningful integration of student voices. These efforts have empowered our students with disabilities to thrive. All the while, the Service has provided invaluable guidance to our staff in creating inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment environments.

The Service has not only addressed the difficulties it has faced over the years - it has redefined them. Today, the Trinity disAbility Service is recognised nationally and internationally for its leadership in inclusive education.

Indeed, the disAbility Service's new home in Printing House Square is more than just a physical space - it is a powerful symbol of the central role inclusion now plays in College life.

So, to everyone involved in the disAbility Service - past and present - thank you. Your work continues to shape a more inclusive Trinity.

I look forward to all that lies ahead.
Gura fada buan sibh go léir.

Linda Doyle

Provost and President, Trinity College Dublin

Opening Reflections



By Declan Treanor,
disAbility Service Director

As the Director of the disAbility Service at Trinity College Dublin, I have had the privilege of witnessing and contributing to a remarkable journey of transformation. Over nearly three decades, Trinity has evolved from a place where accessibility was an afterthought to a university where inclusivity and support for disabled people are central to its mission.

This journey began in 1995 with the establishment of the Special Needs Committee, a modest but critical first step. By 2000, the formal creation of the disAbility Service marked the start of a dedicated approach to providing students with disabilities the supports they needed to thrive. From those early days in a single office in the Arts Building, the service has grown exponentially, reaching over 2,800 students in 2025.

Throughout this journey, we have achieved milestones that reflect our commitment to empowering students. The launch of the Assistive Technology and Information Centre in 2003 provided state-of-the-art technology tools to support learning. In 2008, the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum embedded accessibility into course design. The introduction of the Trinity Ability Co-op in 2020 created a platform for students to lead inclusivity efforts. These developments, along with TCD Sense - sensory-friendly spaces and disability-led audits, reflect the university's dedication to fostering an environment where everyone can succeed.

One of the most symbolic moments in our journey was the redesign of Front Square in 2010. Transforming this iconic 430-year-old space to include accessible pathways was a statement of intent. It showed that accessibility is not an afterthought but a cornerstone of Trinity's identity. This historic change demonstrated to all - students, staff, and visitors, that everyone is welcome and valued here.

The opening of the Trinity disAbility Hub in Printing House Square in 2022 represented the culmination of years of vision and effort. This state-of-the-art facility is not just a physical space; it is a symbol of the inclusivity, innovation, and empowerment that define the disAbility Service today.

It provides a hub for support, collaboration, and community, a place where students can feel truly seen and supported.

As I reflect on this journey, I am deeply proud of the progress we have made. Yet our work is far from finished. Each milestone reminds us of the need to keep listening to our disabled students, to challenge barriers, and to build a truly inclusive university where everyone, regardless of ability, can thrive. As we look to the future, the disAbility Hub will become a dynamic 'Fourth Space': a transformative environment where disabled students and staff lead, shape, and innovate. This vision drives us forward, ensuring that inclusivity not only remains at the heart of Trinity College Dublin but also defines its future.

Declan Treanor - disAbility Service Director



The Trinity Campanile,
and accessible pathway.

Transforming this iconic
430-year-old space to
include accessible
pathways was a statement
of intent.

1995

The disAbility Service Journey Begins



The first logo used by the Disability Service.

**“The End of a Chapter,
The Start of a New Chapter.
The Journey Still Continues.”**

The story of the **Trinity disAbility Service** from Room 3055 in the Arts Building in **1995** to Trinity disAbility Hub in Printing House Square in **2022**.

Laying the groundwork

A Special Needs Committee is established in Trinity.

In 1995, Trinity College Dublin established a **Special Needs Committee**, marking a significant step toward supporting students with disabilities. This initiative laid the groundwork for the formal establishment of the Disability Service in June 2000.



Project Interact



1995

Trinity College Dublin (TCD) has supported the successful inclusion of individuals with learning difficulties since 1995 via two significant programmes. The first programme, **Project Interact**, occurred between the years of 1995 and 2000.

Project Interact aimed to provide certified mainstream education to individuals with intellectual disabilities. The programme enabled students to learn in inclusive settings both on the Trinity College Dublin (TCD) campus and in community-based work environments. Participants engaged in a range of courses focused on education, personal development, and life planning. By the year 2000, a total of 54 students with intellectual disabilities had taken part in Project Interact.

The second programme involving tertiary education for individuals with intellectual disabilities at Trinity was the pilot programme for the forthcoming **Certificate in Contemporary Living**, in the newly founded National Institute of Intellectual Disabilities (now TCPID) which occurred between October 2004 and May 2005.

This part-time pilot programme provided educational and social experiences for fifteen post- secondary school students.

1996

Disability Service setup

Dr. Alan Tuffery, Disability Liaison Officer, was appointed to support students with disabilities at Trinity College Dublin.



Dr Alan Tuffery

Dr Tuffery was a College Tutor for over 30 years and Senior Tutor (1989-95) and was deeply involved in Student Services in Ireland and in the development of Disability Services in College.

“Disability is a guiding principle that puts every person’s ability first.”

1997-1998

Disability Service Coordinator appointed

The Disability Service slowly established some basic protocols and application procedures, but services were very limited.

Government and EU funding improved and in 1998 the then Senior Tutor, David Abrahamson, asked Dr. Alan Tuffery to serve as Disability Services Coordinator.



Where HEAR and DARE came from

1999

In April 1999, Council and Board approved the introduction of up to seventy reserved places across the range of undergraduate degree courses in the College to students from Trinity Access programme (TAP) schools.

The Trinity Access programme (TAP) is part of Trinity's contribution to tackling educational disadvantage and is a clear demonstration of the College's social mission in action.



Disabled students who were unable to enter via the CAO points system were allowed to enter Trinity as one year students and as they progressed they continued their degrees. This was a pre-DARE route for students and worked well.



2000

Full-time Disability Officer Appointed

Growth and Innovation

The Disability Service (DS) was formally set up with the employment of a Disability Service Coordinator (the present Director, Declan Treanor).

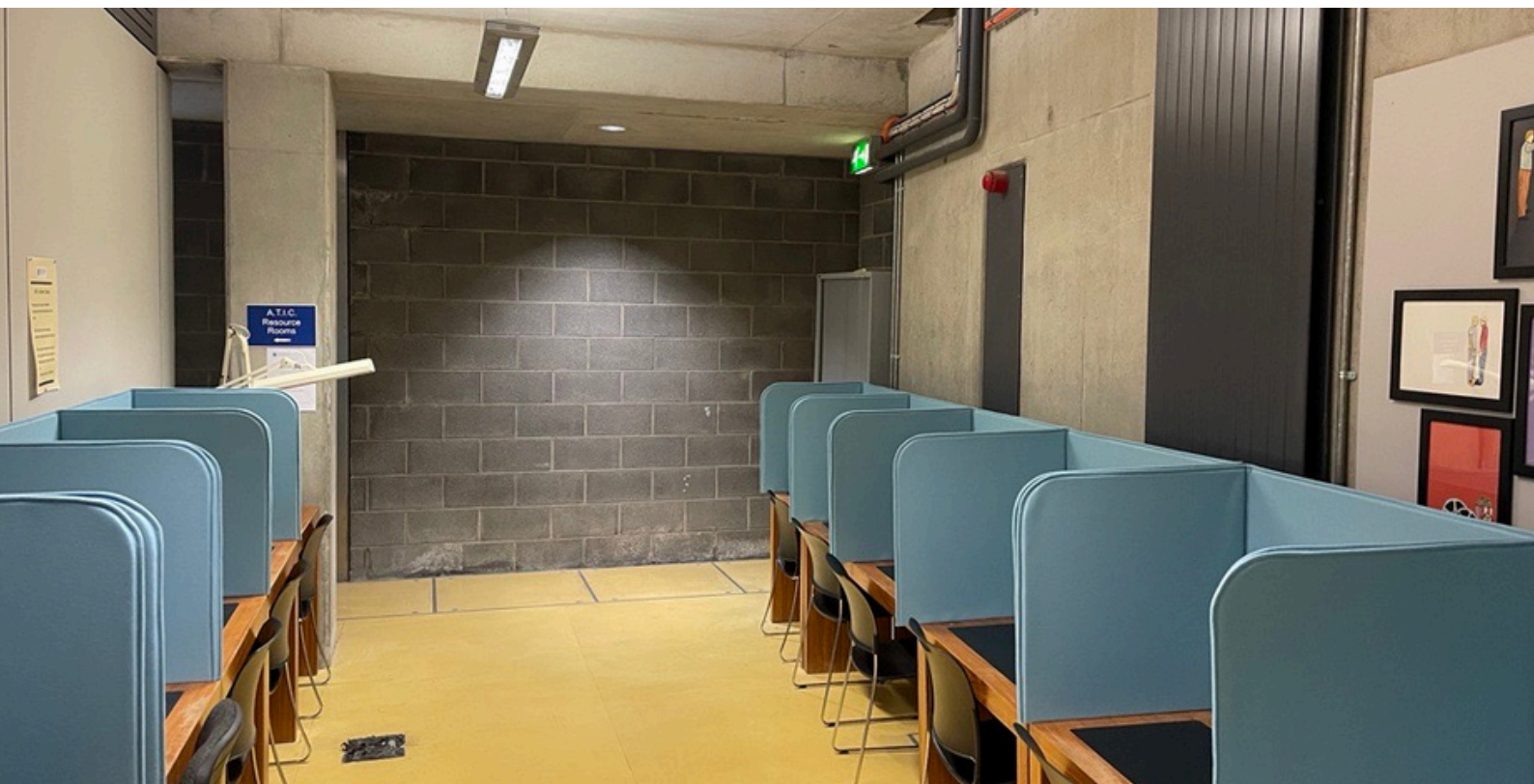
An office in the Arts Building, Room 3055 (formerly a respite room) was provided for the service. The service worked closely with the Examinations Officer, Ms Gaye Fallon to ensure all exam supports were in place when needed.



"I was able to make real connections in Trinity College early on."
- Declan Treanor.

Photo credit:
Nathan O'Gara for The University Times

The Disability Service primary function at set up was to support disabled students. There were a total of 64 disabled students at this time.



Assistive Technology and Information Centre

2001

Assistive Technology and Information Centre (ATIC) was founded, a partnership between the Disability Service, the Library, and Information Service Systems (ISS).

HEA Strategic Initiative Funding was granted to develop assistive technology and services.

“ The importance of accessibility is that it improves the experience for all of us. ”

The Origins and Impact of the LENS (Learning and Educational Needs Summary)

The LENS document originated in 2002 as part of a three-year Higher Education Authority-funded initiative led by the Trinity Disability Service. The Learning Statement Project, managed by Project Officer Orlaith O'Brien, sought to establish a sensitive, consistent, and structured way to communicate the learning needs of disabled students across the university.

Piloted in BESS, Engineering, Science, English, and French, early efforts focused on what information should be shared and how. Initially called the Individual Learning and Educational Agreement (ILEA), the name evolved into LENS – Learning and Educational Needs Summary to reflect a collaborative, student-centred approach.

The LENS captured essential information: a student's disability (with consent), their strengths and challenges, supports from the DS, and recommended course and exam accommodations. Over time, templates were developed for different types of disabilities, and standardised language allowed for clear, professional communication.

LENS Story



Early implementation varied by faculty. Academic Liaison Officers (ALOs) and Tutors played key roles in dissemination. As demand grew, automation and database tools were introduced. Today, LENS reports are shared via SITS with Tutors, Disability Liaison Officers, Module Coordinators, and the Academic Registry.

More than an administrative tool, the LENS is deeply meaningful to students. As Declan Treanor, Director of the Disability Service, explains:

"Students often describe their LENS as their 'disability passport', a document that speaks on their behalf so they don't have to repeatedly explain or justify their needs. It is both practical and empowering, removing barriers to participation and enabling inclusion from day one."

Now widely recognised as a symbol of good disability practice, the LENS has influenced policy and support structures in universities across Ireland and beyond. Trinity remains the leader in its implementation, and the term LENS has become synonymous with best practice in disability-inclusive design and support.

What began as a local pilot is now a cornerstone of inclusive education, one that continues to evolve with the vision of *Access for All*.

2002 Botany Bay

Provision of nine accessible residence rooms in three houses in Botany Bay allow disabled students to live in Trinity and study.

2001 - 2002

222
(*1.5%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**

***The percentage of the student population**



“
An accessible
campus creates
a better
experience
for everyone”

ATIC opens in the new Ussher Library

2003

The Assistive Technology Information Centre (ATIC) was established in the newly opened Ussher Library to support disabled students. It featured state-of-the-art assistive technology and provided a dedicated, accessible space for students who required these tools to support their learning.



Mark Pollock, disabled graduate of BESS in Trinity an inspirational speaker, sportsman, entrepreneur, and who is blind, with Nick Wolfe, complete the Gobi March in September 2003. An arduous seven-day, six-marathon foot race through the heat of the Gobi Desert in China.

2002 - 2003

285

(1.9%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**

2004

University Strategic Plan Statement

The University's Strategic Plan stated that "Disabled students will find the College more friendly and supportive and they will have access to a learning and social environment which will be more appropriate to their needs".

Unilink - Occupational Therapy Support is established. A unique collaborative mental health project with the Discipline of Occupational Therapy (OT).

In response to a need to provide practical intervention for students with mental health difficulties, the Unilink service was established in 2004 by Clodagh Nolan, a lecturer in the Discipline of Occupational Therapy.



2003 - 2004

345
(2.3%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

2005 **The Disability Act enacted**

The Disability Act 2005 was enacted resulting in several positive measures in Trinity, including the appointment of an Access Officer and two Inquiry Officers. This also included a comprehensive Disability Act 2005 complaints procedure.

With the introduction of the Disability Act 2005, the College set out to audit all services, and buildings, to ensure they were accessible to all.

Staff with Disability Supports were introduced and a Code of Practice applying to the Employment of People with Disabilities was implemented to outline all supports available to staff with disabilities.

2004 - 2005

365
(2.4%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**



2006 The Pavilion Bar is made fully accessible

A few years ago, a wheelchair-using student asked a simple but powerful question: “Why can’t I go to the Pav like everyone else?” His sadness at being excluded from a space where so many students gathered sparked a renewed focus on access and belonging. Thanks to his voice and advocacy, the Pavilion Bar, affectionately known as “the Pav”, was made fully accessible at all levels by August 2006, ensuring that no student would be left on the outside looking in again.

A 12% rise in student registrations resulted in an increase in the caseloads of Disability Officers (1.5 Disability Officers since January 2006). This represents a student-to-staff ratio of 284:1.

2005 - 2006

421
(2.8%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

2007

Disability Needs Assessment Developed

The Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Disability Needs Assessment), developed by the Disability Service and the School of Education at Trinity College Dublin, trained professionals in assessing the educational needs of students with disabilities. Twenty-two students graduated, many of whom now work in disability support services. The programme helped build national expertise in inclusive education and informed assessment practice.

The College surpassed the target of 15% CAO quotas for non-traditional students - including those from a socio-economically disadvantaged background, and those with a disability.

2006 - 2007

420
(3.2%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**

2008

Trinity Inclusive Curriculum

The development of the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum (TIC) was a partnership between CAPSL, access initiatives, and the academic community. Trinity received funding for TIC. The aim was to ensure courses in the College are evaluated for inclusive design.

TIC self-evaluation tool was designed for use by staff involved with higher-level teaching, assessment, and information provision. The objective of TIC was to mainstream inclusive principles within the entire College curriculum so as to enable all students.

“ —

Cobble stones in the Front Square of Trinity College Dublin (TCD) are to be remodelled to include smooth stone paths in an effort to improve access for wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility. As the university is obliged to provide universal access under disability legislation, TCD have been granted conditional planning permission for the project. (As mentioned in an article from *University Observer*, Nov 4, 2008. Danielle Moran).

2007 - 2008

434
(2.8%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

eGovernment Web Accessibility Award

2009

An **eGovernment Web Accessibility Award** was presented to the Disability Service for its efforts in making the website accessible to disabled users.



The College Accessible Information Policy is approved by the College board.

2008 - 2009

585
(3.6%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

2009

Launch of the DARE Scheme: A National Milestone in Equity of Access

Launched in 2009, the **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)** introduced a unified national admissions system for students with disabilities across Irish higher education institutions.

Before DARE, universities had their own separate processes. Building on the HEAR scheme, DARE allowed eligible students to enter on reduced points and aimed to ensure equitable access to higher education.

The name was proposed by **Declan Treanor**, then Director of the Trinity Disability Service, who was instrumental in shaping its vision. Since then, DARE has helped thousands of students overcome barriers and thrive in university life.



02 Ability Awards

2010



Trinity College was selected as an Ability Company at the 02 Ability Awards in 2010. Trinity achieved the status of Ability Company in all six categories of the awards: Leadership, Customer Service, Environmental Accessibility, Recruitment and Selection, Learning Development and Progression, and Retention and Wellbeing.

2009 - 2010

685
(4.2%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

Tenth Anniversary of the Disability Service

2010

The Disability Service held its first symposium and launched the **Ten Years of Student Experiences** booklet, TCD Disability Service 2000-2010.

Trinity College Dublin proudly celebrated the 10th anniversary of the College Disability Service.

In 2010 there were almost seven hundred students with disabilities studying at Trinity.



2010

Paving the Way: The Story of Front Square's Accessible Pathways

The Pathways in the Front Square of Trinity College Dublin was completed, allowing a fully accessible journey through the main square of the campus.



Alex Connolly for The University Times

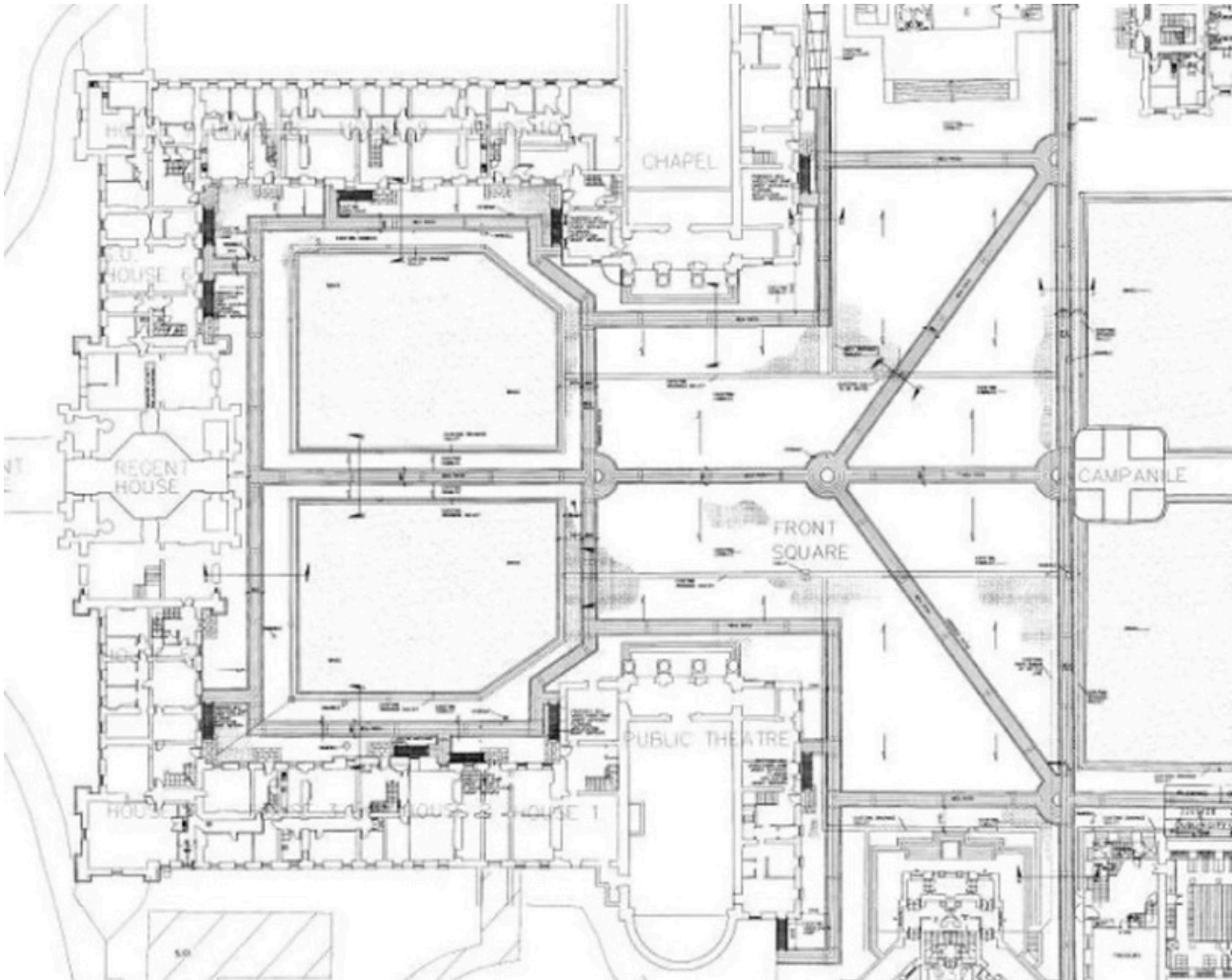
Paving the Way: Inclusion in Stone (2010)

In the heart of Trinity College Dublin lies Front Square, a symbol of tradition, academic excellence, and heritage. Yet for many years, this iconic space also stood as a quiet barrier to inclusion. For wheelchair users, cane users, and those with mobility impairments, the uneven cobblestones made access through Trinity's central quads difficult, sometimes impossible.

The installation of accessible pathways through Front Square in 2010 marked a turning point in the College's history, not just in terms of physical access, but also in its willingness to evolve and embrace inclusion. But this achievement was neither quick nor uncontested. It took more than seven years of sustained advocacy to reach agreement within College and between Trinity and Dublin City Council.



An image of the Front Square of Trinity College Dublin from an article entitled "How far will Trinity go for the disabled?" that featured in Trinity News, 15 November 2000. At that time, one of two proposals for paving in the Front Square were rejected by the Sites and Facilities Committee.



Referenced from - **archiseek.com**

A Path Contested

The debate centred on heritage versus access. Opponents, including some in the university and Dublin City Council, argued for preserving the cobbled square. However, their stance relied on a myth: the cobblestones weren't Georgian but were actually laid in 1972, holding no real historic value.

A Path Contested

This revelation helped advance a determined push for change, spearheaded by the Director of the Disability Service and the Senior Tutor at the time, Dr David Abrahamson. Both insisted that the new pathways should follow the natural desire lines, the direction people actually walked, rather than conform to the rigid architectural symmetry of the surrounding buildings.

However, this proposal met resistance. Traditionalist forces within College argued for alignment with the quadrants of the square, prioritising visual uniformity over lived experience. In the end, a compromise was reached: accessible pathways were installed, but their layout was dictated by architectural alignment, not pedestrian flow.

Wider Conflict: Width and Purpose

The disagreements didn't stop at layout. A notable clash occurred between the Director of the Disability Service and Estates who feared the Dublin City Council Conservation architect, who insisted the path should be only half the proposed width to preserve more of the cobbled aesthetic.

The Director requested a meeting with the architect in Front Square and pushed back firmly, famously asking: “Are you proposing we install traffic lights on the path so that disabled people, parents with buggies, and older people can take turns passing each other?”

It was a moment of sharp clarity. The need for functional, inclusive design triumphed. The full-width pathway went ahead.

The next major advancement came under the leadership of Provost Patrick Prendergast, who supported the continued rollout of accessible routes. Under his direction, new pathways were installed alongside the Graduates Memorial Building (GMB), in front of the Rubrics, and outside the Old Library, and out to College Green, further stitching accessibility into the historic fabric of the College.



Patrick Prendergast

This was more than physical change; it was a visible commitment to equity and inclusion.

During the snowstorm of winter 2018, Trinity made another quiet but powerful statement: while much of Dublin came to a halt, the accessible paths through Front Square were prioritised for snow clearance. While other routes became impassable, these paths remained open – proving once and for all that access benefits everyone.

Legacy and Lessons

The story of Front Square's accessible pathways is not just about cobbles and compromise. It is a story of leadership, persistence, and a shift in institutional mindset. It teaches us that accessibility is not an optional add-on – it is essential infrastructure.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Disability Service, these paths stand as a living symbol of what inclusion looks like when it is hard-won: practical, dignified, and used by all.



Strategic Leadership and Inclusivity

2011

The TCD Asperger's Syndrome (now Autism) Support Service and website was officially launched by the Minister for Health, Dr. James O'Reilly in November 2011. This unique initiative highlighted the specific needs of a newly recognised and growing population of autistic students in higher education, drawing national attention to the importance of tailored supports within university settings.

Unilink, in collaboration with TCD Equality Fund, the TCD Staff Office, and the Student's Union, developed the **5 A Day for Mental Health** booklet, leaflet and website.

The Pathways to Trinity Website was launched on 11th April 2011. This pre-entry information allowed better decision making.

Trinity received the **UK JISC TechDis OASES Award** for Institutional Progress on Equality using Technology.

2010 - 2011

878
(4.9%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**

2012



The Disability Service held its second annual symposium bringing together disability leaders in higher education to share developments and innovation.

The Unilink Service in Trinity developed an occupational therapy service with Dublin City University, Dublin Institute of Technology, and University College Dublin. Tenders were awarded for each institution.



The pilot of **Pathways to Trinity** workshops for second-level students is launched. Secondary level disabled students attended Trinity for guidance on college life.

2011 - 2012

911
(5.4%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

2013

Grant from Genio Trust



The Disability Service received a significant grant from the **Genio Trust** to develop a Transition to Employment project supporting college students and recent graduates experiencing mental health difficulties, in their transition to employment.

The Professional Placement Planning Process and Guide for students with disabilities on professional courses were launched at the Disability Service 3rd Annual Symposium.

2012 - 2013

1058

(6.4%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

Establishment of TCPID

2014

Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID) was formally launched in 2014 within Trinity's School of Education, evolving from the NIID (National Institute for Intellectual Disability).



TCPID introduced the two-year **Certificate in Arts, Science & Inclusive Applied Practice (ASIAP)**: a full-time academic programme empowering students with intellectual disabilities.

2013 - 2014

1186

(7.1%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

Establishment of TCPID

2014

TCPID's **mission** is to promote inclusive education, drive research and advocacy, establish sustainable pathways to employment, and dismantle societal barriers through higher education.



Why It Matters

- A transformational milestone that transitioned NIID's work into a fully integrated Trinity academic centre.
- TCPID quickly became a national and international leader in inclusive higher education and employment initiatives.



Pathways Volunteer Programme is Launched

The **Pathways Volunteer programme** was launched in June 2014, with 48 students signing up to participate in this ambassador programme.



The Unilink **Fatigue Management Booklet** was launched by the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor Mary McCarron.

The disAbility Service hosted a **Personal Emergency Evacuation Training (PEEPs)** event entitled 'How do I get out of here?' for Access, Buildings, Disability, and Safety Officers in Higher Education Institutes.

Trinity committed significant funding of €1 million to ensure compliance with the Disability Act 2005.

Student Ambassador programme Established

2015



The **Disability Service Student Ambassador programme** was established, with training carried out in the summer of 2015 and 51 students signed up as ambassadors.

Career Pathways, a joint collaboration between Trinity College Dublin's Disability Service and Careers Advisory Service, was awarded the Association of Higher Education Careers Services Employability Award at the 2015 Annual Gradireland Graduate Recruitment Awards.

2014 - 2015

1313
(7.7%)

The number of students with disabilities in Trinity College

2016

National Ann Beckett Occupational Therapy Award Presented



AOTI

Association of Occupational
Therapists of Ireland

National Ann Beckett Occupational Therapy Award presented to the Disability Service for the **Career Pathways Programme**.

The **One-Week Summer programme** for students with Autistic Spectrum Condition was held.

Ambassador Accelerator programme was established and rolled out with 12 Ambassadors over a 5-week period in the Summer of 2016.

Occupational Therapy Service formerly known as Unilink is changed to **Occupational Therapy Support**.

2015 - 2016

1299

(7.6%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

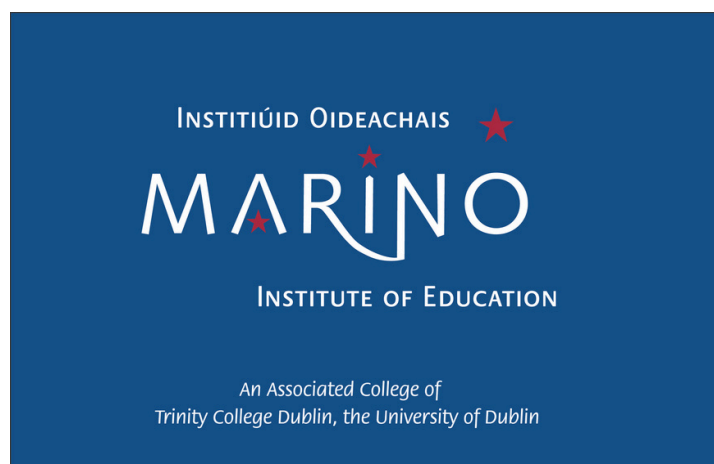
Ready, Steady GO Summer Camp.



2017

The Trinity Students with **Disabilities Ambassador programme** expanded and recruited 15 new Ambassadors.

2017 marked the eight year that the Disability Service had provided a disability service to the **Marino Institute of Education (M.I.E.)**.



Trinity Disability Service hosted the **Ready, Steady Go Summer Camp** for twenty secondary school students with disabilities.

2016 - 2017

1364

(7.7%)

The number of students with disabilities in Trinity College

Trinity Reasonable Accommodation Policy approved by Board

2018

The adoption of the Reasonable Accommodation Policy in January 2018 marked a historic milestone: it was the first policy of its kind in any Irish university, setting a new standard in inclusive higher education nationally.

This pioneering policy, approved by Trinity's University Council in January 2018, provided the first comprehensive framework in Irish higher education for identifying, documenting, and implementing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, compliant with the Disability Act 2005, the Equal Status Acts, and the Universities Act 1997.

Trinity's 2018 policy was a landmark achievement, not only enhancing access and inclusion campus-wide but also positioning the university as a trailblazer in disability policy for the entire Irish higher education sector.

2017 - 2018

1551
(8.6%)

The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities approved by Board



2018

First written in 2007, the first policy of its kind in any Irish university, the Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities set out Trinity's commitment to fair recruitment, workplace adjustments, and equal opportunities for disabled staff.

In 2018, the Code was reissued as a stand-alone policy, aligned with the Employment Equality Acts, the Disability Act, and Trinity's Equality Policy. The code introduced a 3% statutory target (2024 target rises to 6%) for employing staff with disabilities, centralised funding for reasonable accommodations, a formal needs-assessment process, and expanded commitments on staff development, event accessibility, retention, and training.

Over the years, the Code has ensured that disability is never a barrier to career progression at Trinity. It has delivered practical supports, from adaptive technology to flexible arrangements, and fostered a culture where disclosure is met with trust and action.

2019

First Disabled Bicycle Parking Facilities Installed



Trinity College Dublin became the first Irish university to install a **Disabled Cycle Parking Facility**.

Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Objective 1.9: Engage the Wider University Community in Empowering Students with Disabilities.

The Disability Service launched a new website EU supported initiative, the **www.autism-uni.org** to help students with autism to make the transition from school to university.

Trinity Disability IDentity Project

The Disability Service began plans to move to its new state-of-the-art home, Printing House Square.

As part of this move, the Disability Service embarked upon the **Trinity Disability IDentity Project**. The aims of the project included:

- Creating a clear and accepted identity for disability support in Trinity.
- Ensuring that students have a say in what the unit will do and how it will function.
- The naming of meeting spaces after famous Trinity students with disabilities.
- Opening spaces to the disability community for out-of-hours use e.g., Autism social groups, and disabled activist meeting spaces.
- Commissioning a Disabled Art Project for the new square.
- Ensuring that spaces remain student-centered.

2018 - 2019

1629
(8.8%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**



2020

COVID-19

Response to COVID-19

The Disability Service reacted to the COVID-19-enforced closure of college by switching immediately to the provision of a full service remotely in March 2020. As we were fully digital before covid all staff were working remotely from the outset and using college IT systems to communicate and work effectively.

The Trinity Disability Service Strategic Plan 2020-2025
Empowering Students with Disabilities was launched.

2019 - 2020

1722
(9.4%)

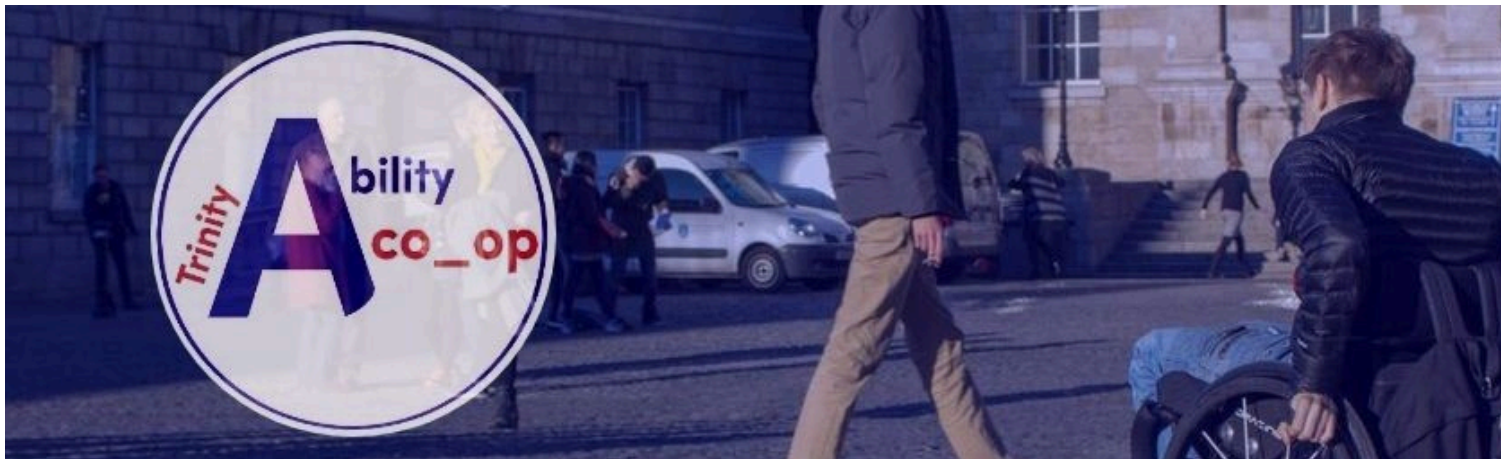
The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College

2020

The Trinity Ability co_op

The Trinity Ability co_op, a fully disabled student-led activist group, was established to campaign for inclusion and accessibility in Trinity. Acting as a critical voice, the co_op challenges College bodies and services, while providing a space for meetings, project work, events, and exhibitions.

Members of the co_op ensure that their voices are heard, and take ownership of inclusive practices across the Trinity community.



More information on the
Trinity Ability co_op



2021

**Linda Doyle
becomes the 45th,
and first female
Provost of Trinity
College Dublin**

Elected in 2021, Provost Linda Doyle's Imagine Trinity 2031 manifesto put fairness, belonging, and diverse voices at its core. She pledged to remove barriers so disabled students and staff can fully participate, working with groups like the Ability Co-op to shape policy.

Her vision centres on making all aspects of Trinity, campus, teaching, and events, accessible, with universal design embedded throughout. While not naming specific projects, she committed to improving infrastructure and exceeding accessibility standards to ensure ability, inclusion, and belonging for all.

2020 - 2021

1826
(10%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**

TCD Sense Project

2021

HEA Strategic Initiative: Trinity Disability Service was successful in obtaining funding of €482,364. This funding went to several projects including the **Sensory Processing Project**, to create a further inclusive campus by focusing on support and services for students with sensory processing issues.

TCDSense
Think Sensory...



Sensory Spaces



Entrance Transition Study Space in the Lecky Library.

The College opens sensory spaces on campus. More than 80 individual study spaces have been created within six sensory areas across the Berkeley (now Boland), Lecky, Ussher, Hamilton, and John Stearne libraries, with an additional five areas to be completed in the future. The spaces were developed by TCD Sense Project as part of the Trinity Sensory Processing Project to make College more accessible for students who experience barriers to managing and adapting to campus' sensory environments.

2021 - 2022

2061
(10%)

**The number of students
with disabilities in
Trinity College**

ADHD Clinic Launched

2022

The ADHD Clinic provides coordinated support for students with a confirmed ADHD diagnosis and a stable treatment plan, focusing on continuity of care rather than initial diagnosis. Run in collaboration between the College Health Service and the Disability Service, it offers semester-based check-ins, medication management where appropriate, and links to occupational therapy, academic supports, and reasonable accommodations. Its purpose is to help students manage their condition effectively, address challenges early, and ensure they can fully participate in university life through integrated health, academic, and wellbeing supports.



2022 - 2023

2312
(10%)

The number of students with disabilities in Trinity College

2022 **disAbility Service**

Renaming of the disAbility Service

The Disability Service is renamed to the disAbility Service. By capitalising the "A" in "disAbility," it allows individuals to choose where they place emphasis based on their personal preference and relationship with the term.

Disabled Community Engagement

The Disabled Community Engagement initiative began to improve disabled student participation in extracurricular activities

PATH 4 Project Developed

The PATH 4 Project developed modules and resources for students with intellectual disabilities and all disabilities, emphasising Universal Design for Learning (UDL).



PATH

The **Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH)** is a dedicated fund committed to increasing participation by under-represented students.

Phase 1 (2022)

Universal Design Fund - Supporting inclusive universally designed education environments for all. Student Journey mapping took place across all student services to ensure all were accessible to all students.

Phase 2 (2023-2025)

Proposals for course provision for Students with Intellectual Disabilities.



PATH

Programme for Access
to Higher Education

2022

Trinity disAbility Hub

Printing House Square is the new home of the **Trinity disAbility Service**, located within the **Trinity disAbility Hub**. The Hub spans two floors at the heart of three accommodation blocks. The first floor includes two offices, while the open-plan lower floor features six meeting rooms.



The new space aims “to provide a platform for innovation and inclusion” by directly engaging with students.

Trinity disAbility Hub

Logo Design



The new logo was designed by **Trinity Disabled Students** as part of the Trinity Disability IDentity project. Printing House Square is shaped as per the new logo. Purple is the disabled colour.

disAbility: Describes the activity being provided yet focuses on the positive aspect of the term, 'Ability'.

Hub: is based at the centre of this new hive of activity and serves as the point on the Trinity campus from which all disability-related activity/enterprise emanates.

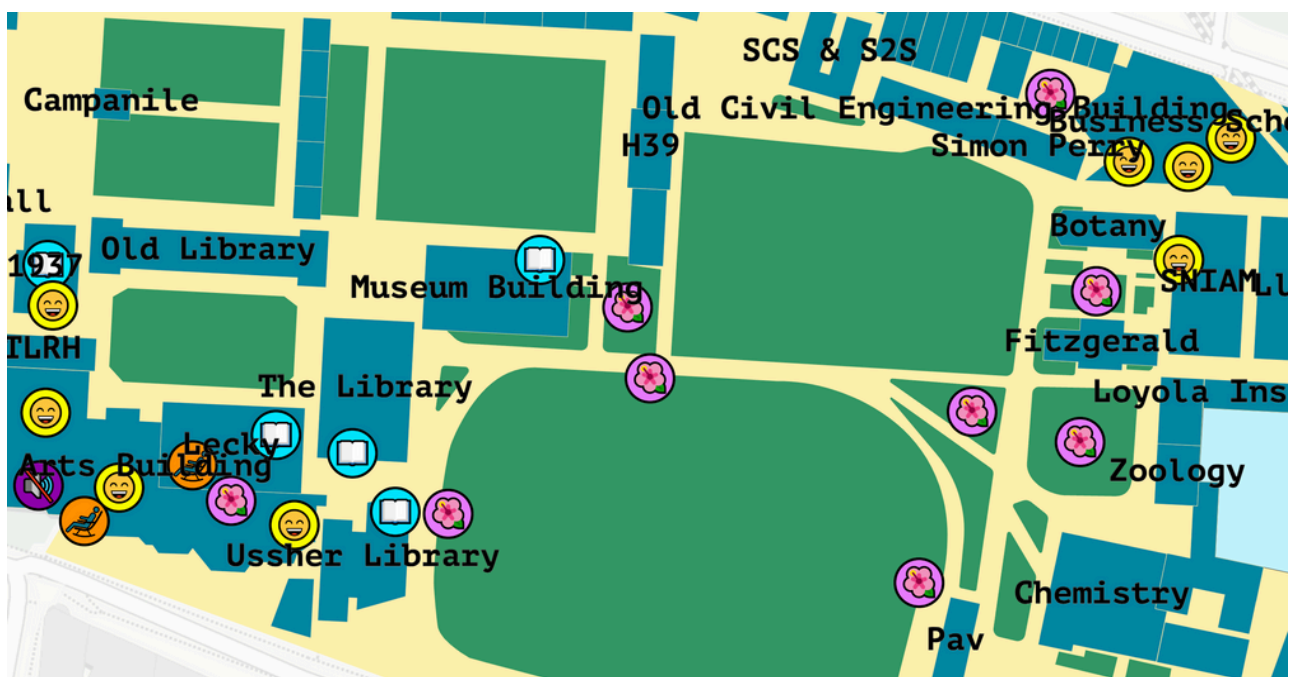
2023

Official Launch TCD Sense Map

As part of TCD disAbility Week on November 29th, 2023, TCD Sense, an initiative of the Trinity disAbility Hub, was thrilled to unveil the **TCD Sense Map**.

This innovative tool, collaboratively created by neurodivergent student interns from the Trinity disAbility Service and Trinity engineering graduate Dan O'Reilly, goes beyond traditional navigation, offering a beacon of inclusivity that caters to the sensory needs of the entire campus community.

The TCD Sense Map is not just a culmination of innovative thought and collaborative effort; it is a beacon leading Trinity towards a more inclusive and understanding future.



Sustainability Charter



Declan Treanor, disAbility Service Director set out to make their space fully sustainable from the outset when they made the move into their new premises in the Trinity disAbility Hub, Printing House Square. There are no printers in the building, no bins at desks, staff use digital notebooks and have an office structure that reflects their sustainable ethos.



Scan the QR code above to view the Trinity DisAbility Hub Sustainability Charter.

Declan Treanor, disAbility Service Director, holding his Sustainability Award outside the Trinity disAbility Hub in 2023, during Trinity's 21st annual Green Week: 'Healthy Planet, Healthy People'.

Trinity disAbility Service disAbled Leaders' Project



Jack Kavanagh
Advocator



Laura Beston
Collaborator



Rosaleen McDonagh
Dynamic



Dr Vivian Rath
Inclusive

Celebrating the Achievements of disAbled Trinity Graduates



Mark Pollock
Pioneer



Dr Patricia McCarthy
Inquisitive



Sinéad Burke
Positive Disruptor



Tara Kearns
Painter for the DisAbled Leaders' Project

The Leaders' Project celebrated disabled Trinity graduates who have gone on to make a difference both in Irish society and globally. The memory of these graduates has literally been built into the identity of Printing House Square, with each of the main meeting rooms named after one of the Leaders.

disAbled Leaders' Project Rationale

The Disabled Leaders Project is a unique initiative that celebrates the achievements of disabled Trinity graduates who have gone on to make a difference in Irish society and beyond. The project is particularly noteworthy because it not only acknowledges the contribution of disabled leaders but also incorporates their memory into the identity of Printing House Square, the central hub of Trinity College Dublin. Each of the main meeting rooms in the square is named after one of the leaders, and a painting of each one adorns the walls of the corresponding room. This recognition of disabled leaders is a powerful statement in a society that has often overlooked the contributions of disabled people. The project profiles seven disabled leaders - **Sinéad Burke, Rosaleen McDonagh, Jack Kavanagh, Vivian Rath, Mark Pollock, Laura Beston** and **Patricia McCarthy** - each of whom has made a significant impact in their respective fields.

2024



Trinity College

disAbleD Led
Accessibility Audits

Dublin

Trinity disAbility & Health Services hired a **Mental Health Social Worker** to bridge disability and mental health services in college and with external supports.

The User-Led Accessibility Audit Tool (ULAA-Tool) placed disabled students at the centre of assessing Trinity's physical and sensory environments, ensuring improvements are driven by lived experience. Interns conducted audits across campus, identifying barriers in navigation, signage, lighting, acoustics, and the usability of doors and lifts. Their findings led to informed long-term development plans, embedding accessibility as a core design principle.

2023 - 2024

2559
(11.6%)*

Total Number of Disabled
Students that have applied
for disAbility Service supports

Inclusive Internships

In 2024, the disAbility Service expanded the Inclusive Internship programme by placing 25 disabled student internships across 17 departments.



Trinity celebrates the disAbility Inclusive Internship programme

DAWN examination guidelines

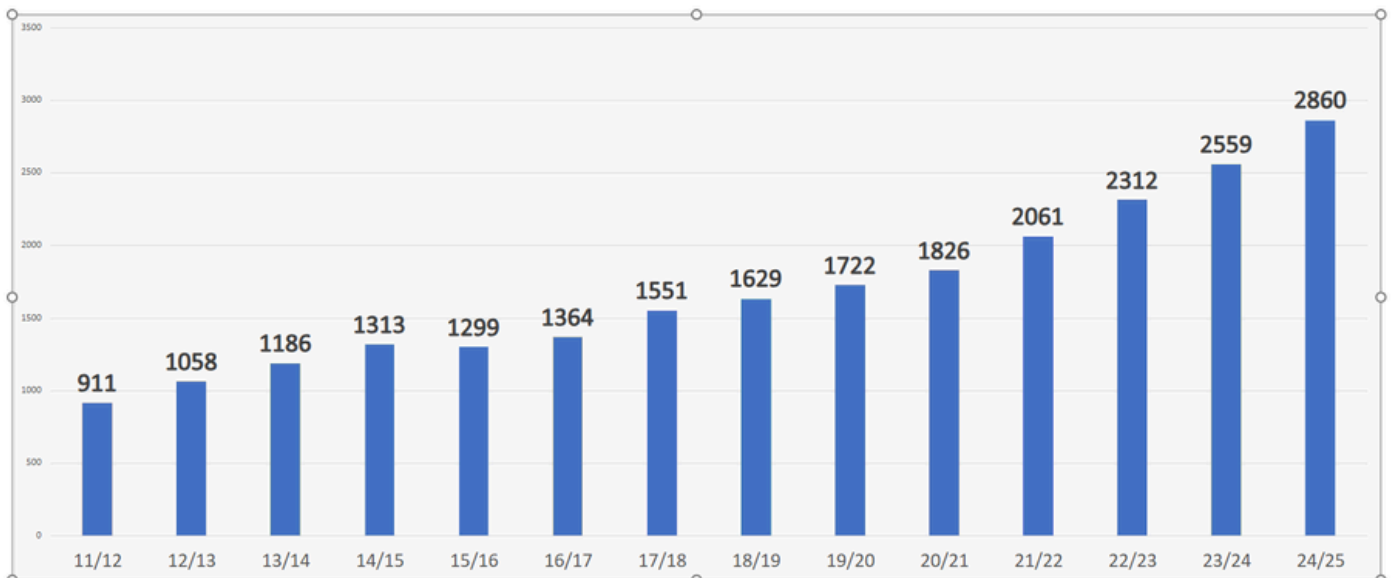
Trinity disAbility Hub led on a significant review of the national DAWN examination guidelines in 2025. The goal is to refine and standardise examination practices across higher education institutions (HEIs) to ensure fairness and accessibility for all students. This project aims to make a significant impact on the accessibility and fairness of examination processes across all HEIs.



Impact in Numbers

Growth in student registrations with the disAbility Service:

- **2000/2001:** 64 students
- **2010/2011:** 818 students
- **2020/2021:** 1826 students
- **2024/2025:** 2860 students



2025

Marking 25 Years of the Trinity disAbility Service

As we celebrate a quarter-century of advancing access, belonging, and rights-based support, 2025 stands out as a transformative year in our journey. Trinity's disAbility Service continues to lead sectoral firsts, scale inclusive systems, and embed disability across strategic university priorities.

Systems for Scale

- HALO CRM launched, replacing SID with GDPR-compliant, person-centred case management
- Power BI Dashboards implemented across Schools to monitor trends, drive accountability, and improve planning
- SITS-Blackboard Ultra API developed to align exam accommodations with teaching systems

Employability & Recognition

- 2025 College-wide Inclusive Internship Programme launched
- Trinity Ability co_op recognised as UNCRPD-compliant Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO)



Universal Access: A National First

- Ireland's first Disability Officer for Staff approved, co-led with HR and EDI
- The COO approved Trinity's Five-Year Physical Accessibility Enhancement Plan
- Dedicated UA Project Manager post created to lead capital and compliance works



Community & Celebration

- Art for Action Exhibition, AuDHD Research Seminar, and the Christy Nolan Creative Showcase headlined a powerful anniversary year
- The Occupational Therapy Approach in Trinity College Dublin – Past, Present and Future Conference

25 Years of Progress: A New Era for disAbility Inclusion at Trinity

From humble beginnings in 2000, the Trinity disAbility Service has become a national and international leader in inclusive education.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we unveil a new chapter with the our next disAbility Action Plan 2025–2030, founded on the principle: **Leave No One Behind**.



This plan introduces the Trinity Inclusive Integrated Model (TIIM) - a future-proof approach to education, belonging, and leadership for all disabled students.



Highlights from our 2025–2030 Disability Action Plan

As we celebrate 25 years of the Trinity Disability Service, we look ahead with a bold and ambitious plan that builds on our proud history. Here are some of the exciting milestones we are working towards:

The Fourth Space

A pioneering framework where disabled students and staff are not just participants, but co-creators, leaders, and innovators in shaping Trinity's policies, research, services, and spaces – grounded in the values of Ubuntu, inclusion, and belonging.

Opening Doors to Careers

Expansion of our Inclusive Internship Programme, new targeted placements for high-barrier groups, alumni mentoring, and the launch of an Employability Passport to prepare every student for success beyond Trinity.

The disAbility Hub as a Global Leader

Our Hub will become a centre of excellence for disability and higher education research, hosting global summits, supporting student fellowships, and publishing influential policy tools.

A More Accessible Trinity

Our Universal Access 5-Year Plan will transform teaching, learning, and campus design with user-led audits and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) embedded across all programmes.

Sustainability at the Heart

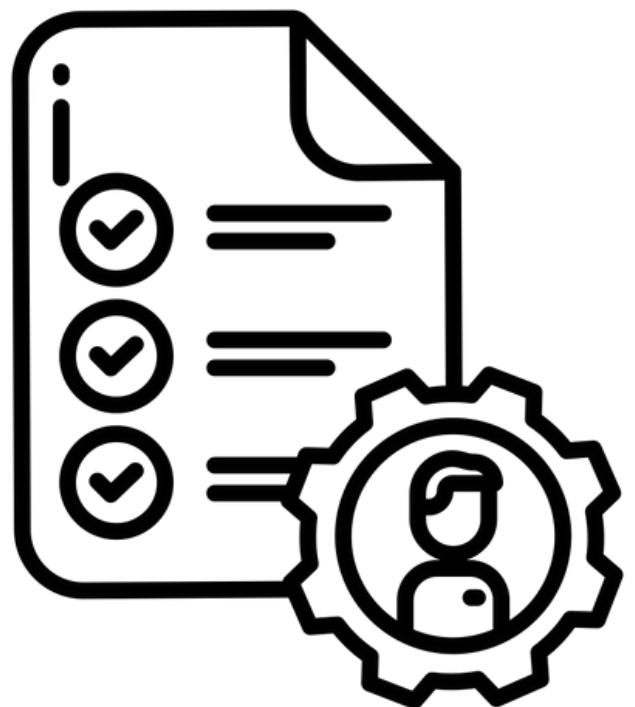
Through our Sustainability Charter, we will show that inclusion and environmental responsibility go hand-in-hand, from event planning to everyday operations.

Empowering Our People

With our People & Culture Charter, we are building a values-led, supportive workplace that allows our staff to innovate, collaborate, and lead change.

Tracking Our Impact

Every year we will measure our progress in accessibility, leadership representation, graduate success, and the sense of belonging across our community – ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.



Our Four Strategic Pillars



1. disAbled Partnerships & Leadership

Goal: Embed lived experience in governance, policy-making, and service design through structured participation and leadership opportunities.



2. Enhanced Employability

Goal: Increase access to employment, professional development, and leadership opportunities for disabled students and staff.



3. Research, Innovation & the disAbility Hub

Goal: Position the disAbility Hub as a national and international centre of excellence for research, innovation, and policy influence in disability and higher education.



4. Embedding Access & Inclusion Across Trinity

Goal: Transform Trinity into a universally designed institution across physical, digital, and pedagogical environments.



“This plan is our promise — to embed inclusion in every part of Trinity and ensure that no one is left behind.”

Declan Treanor, Director, Trinity Disability Service

“Over the past 25 years, the Trinity Disability Service has evolved from a small, dedicated support team into a sector leader, shaping policy, transforming spaces, and reimagining what inclusion can look like in higher education. Its work has not only changed individual lives but has changed Trinity itself, creating a university where disabled students and staff are recognised as leaders, innovators, and equal members of our community.”

Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

Trinity disAbility Service

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Scan the QR code
for the disAbility
Service website.

