



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

Trinity disAbility Services Annual Report Executive Report 2025-2026

Trinity
disAbility Hub

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Director's Foreword

Delivering Access, Belonging, and Inclusion

The 2025–2026 academic year marked a significant stage in the development of Trinity's approach to disability inclusion. The Trinity disAbility Service supported more than 3,000 disabled students, representing over 13% of the student population, while also progressing a major programme of service and institutional reform.

During the year, Project LENS entered its next phase; HALO CRM was introduced as the Service's integrated case-management platform; disability registration and student-engagement pathways were redesigned; and new data, reporting and governance arrangements were developed. Together, these changes are creating a more proactive, coordinated, and accountable approach to identifying, communicating, and implementing reasonable accommodations.

This work reflects an important shift. Disability inclusion can no longer be understood primarily as the provision of individual supports by a specialist service. It requires shared institutional responsibility across teaching, learning, assessment, digital systems, the physical environment, and the wider student experience. The Service's work therefore remained closely aligned with the **Trinity Strategic Plan 2025–2030** and the University's emerging plan for access, inclusion and belonging.

Universal Design and student partnership were central to this approach. Disabled students contributed directly through the Trinity Ability Co-op, User-Led Accessibility Audits, and co-designed programmes. Collaboration with Schools, Academic Registry, Estates and Facilities, IT Services, Human Resources, and other professional services strengthened the University's capacity to address barriers through mainstream planning and decision-making. The progress achieved reflects the professionalism of the disAbility Service team, the contribution of colleagues across Trinity and, most importantly, the expertise and partnership of disabled students and staff.

The priority for 2026–2027 is to embed these reforms consistently across the University. Success will depend on sustained institutional ownership, effective governance and continued collaboration between Schools, professional services, and the disAbility Service. This will enable Trinity to move from responding to barriers individually towards designing an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming University for all.

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Director | Stiúrthóir

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Executive Summary

Overview

The Trinity disAbility Service continued to experience sustained growth during the 2025–2026 academic year, supporting more than 3,000 disabled students across undergraduate, postgraduate and foundation programmes. Disabled students now represent over thirteen per cent of the University's student population, reflecting increasing participation in higher education and continued confidence in the support available within Trinity.

Throughout the year the Service maintained its core responsibility of delivering timely, student-centred reasonable accommodations while simultaneously implementing significant strategic developments that will strengthen accessibility across the University over the coming years.

Rather than focusing solely on individual support provision, the Service increasingly adopted a whole-university approach, working collaboratively with academic and professional services to embed accessibility within institutional systems, teaching practice, digital environments, and the student experience.

DisAbility Service Highlights 2025–2026

The Trinity disAbility Service (DS) made significant progress in 2025–26 in enhancing student supports, advancing sectoral practice, and embedding inclusion across academic, residential, and professional environments.

- **Celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Trinity disAbility Service** through a year-long programme of events highlighting 25 years of leadership in disability inclusion, Universal Design, accessibility, research, and student partnership, culminating in disAbility Week 2025.
- **Supported over 3,000 disabled students**, representing more than 13% of the Trinity student population, reflecting continued growth in demand for disability supports and inclusive practices.
- **Implemented Project LENS Phase 2**, introducing a redesigned student engagement model, enhanced triage, automated reasonable accommodations, improved School reporting, and a more integrated student support pathway.
- **Introduced the University's 7-day automatic extension model**, providing a consistent and equitable approach to in-course reasonable accommodations for disabled students.
- **Developed a sector-leading Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodation (NSRA) framework**, improving governance, transparency, and consistency in complex reasonable accommodation decision-making.

- **Launched HALO CRM**, transforming Disability Service case management, communication, workflow management, reporting, and quality assurance.
- **Expanded Occupational Therapy and specialist support**, delivering more than 2,500 Occupational Therapy appointments while further integrating Mental Health Social Work and multidisciplinary case management.
- **Piloted innovative group-based academic support programmes**, increasing specialist academic support capacity by approximately 50% while improving student engagement and independence.
- **Advanced the use of Artificial Intelligence and Assistive Technology**, commencing research into GenAI to support neurodivergent learners and expanding inclusive digital learning tools.
- **Established a dedicated Staff Disability Liaison Officer**, creating Trinity's first specialist service for disabled staff and introducing a new governance framework for workplace accommodations.
- **Strengthened accessibility across the University**, progressing Universal Access planning, User-Led Accessibility Audits, digital accessibility initiatives, and improvements to learning, assessment and the physical environment.
- **Expanded employability initiatives**, including the Trinity disAbility Internship Programme and new pathways supporting disabled students into graduate employment.
- **Enhanced financial and accommodation supports**, including continued growth in the Fund for Students with Disabilities and expansion of the Disabled Residential Accommodation Bursary.
- **Increased national and international leadership**, presenting Trinity's work at conferences and seminars across Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States, reinforcing Trinity's reputation as a leader in disability inclusion in higher education.

Key Performance Indicators

Number of new disabled students UG entrants by entry route)	DARE Reduced Points: 283 DARE Merit: 218 HEAR: 10 Mature (Over 23): 32 Other new entrants: 533 Total: 1076
Number of new disabled students - UG/PG/Foundation	UG: 2628 PG: 425 Foundation: 20 Total: 3073
Number of International disabled students (non-Irish)	Total: 740
Number of needs assessments carried out	Total: 1047
Number of students supported/funded by FSD student disability fund	Total: 3074
Number of students receiving exam accommodations	Total: 7208
Number of Assistive Technology assessments/appointments	Referrals: 55 Appointments: 92
Number of disabled students receiving Occupational Therapy supports/appointments	Students: 1049 Appointments: 2517
Number of disabled students availing of Professional Placement support	171
Number of disabled students /parents supported pre-entry	Pre-entry online events: 358 attended Neurodiversity+ pre-orientation: 90 (50 on waiting list)

	General Induction: 198 Parent Talk: 76 Course orientation disability talks: 45
Number of disabled students whose residential accommodations applications were supported	Total: 153
Number of school/departmental meetings	Total: 36
Number of disabled students supported by Educational Support Workers (ESW)	Total: 27
Number of disabled staff supported	Total: 62

Operational Performance Summary (DS1–DS11)

The disAbility Service operates through eleven integrated operational processes (DS1–DS11), which collectively support the student lifecycle, institutional accessibility, and continuous service improvement. During 2025–2026 each operational area delivered significant developments aligned with Trinity's *Thrive 2025–2030* Strategic Plan, the emerging Access, Belonging and Inclusion Plan, Universal Design principles and increasing legislative expectations.

DS1 – Pre-Entry and Transition to First Year

The Service continued to strengthen transition supports through enhanced pre-entry communications, Disability Orientation and Neurodiversity+ Pre-Orientation programmes. Collaboration with Admissions, TAP and Schools improved the student transition experience, while planning commenced for a new Integrated Student Engagement Model providing structured support from pre-entry through the end of first year.

DS2 – Disability Supports and Reasonable Accommodations

DS2 remained the core operational function of the Service, supporting more than 3,000 registered disabled students through needs assessments, Learning Educational Needs Summaries (LENS), examination accommodations, professional placement support, and residential accommodation planning. Significant developments included implementation of the University's 7-day automatic extension model, redesign of the disability registration pathway, enhanced triage, Project LENS Phase 2, HALO case management, and development of a sector-leading Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodation decision-making framework.

DS3 – Inclusive Learning and Assistive Technology

The Service expanded inclusive learning through assistive technology, institution-wide software licensing, and digital accessibility initiatives. Blackboard Ally continued to support accessible teaching materials across the University, while Genio note-taking software and specialist assistive technologies promoted greater student independence. Initial work also commenced on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence to support neurodivergent learners within an evidence-based framework.

DS4 – Occupational Therapy, Mental Health, and Wellbeing

Occupational Therapy continued to provide one of the largest specialist student support programmes within the University, delivering more than 2,500 appointments during the year. The integrated Mental Health Social Work model strengthened multidisciplinary support, while ADHD and Autism groups, transition supports for returning students and independent living programmes further expanded wellbeing and participation. This year also marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of Occupational Therapy within the Trinity disAbility Service.

DS5 – Financial Supports and Resource Management

The Service maintained effective financial governance across operational budgets while continuing to maximise external funding through the Fund for Students with Disabilities. Financial support initiatives expanded through continued development of the Disabled Residential Accommodation Bursary, ensuring that disability-related financial barriers were reduced wherever possible.

DS6 – Student Information Systems (SITS) and Digital Integration

Significant progress was made in integrating disability processes within university digital systems. Project LENS, SITS developments, Power BI reporting and HALO workflow redesign collectively improved automation, reporting, communication, and operational efficiency while reducing administrative burden across the student journey.

DS7 – Outreach, Engagement and Partnership

The Service strengthened engagement with prospective students, Schools, professional services, parents, international applicants, and external stakeholders. Outreach activities supported widening participation, promoted disability awareness, and strengthened collaborative partnerships both within Trinity and nationally.

DS8 – Funding, Educational Support Workers and Reporting

Management of the Fund for Students with Disabilities, Educational Support Workers and statutory reporting continued to operate effectively despite increasing demand. Enhanced reporting systems improved financial accountability, monitoring and evidence-based planning while ensuring timely provision of specialist supports.

DS9 – Quality Assurance, Communications and Continuous Improvement

Quality assurance remained central to operational delivery. During the year, the Service completed comprehensive reviews of policies, operational procedures and workflows, strengthened communications through new digital systems, expanded performance reporting, and embedded a continuous improvement model aligned with annual operational planning.

DS10 – Staff with Disabilities

A significant milestone during 2025–2026 was the establishment of Trinity's first dedicated Staff Disability Liaison Officer. This new service introduced structured governance for workplace accommodations, strengthened collaboration with Human Resources, and supported the University's commitment to disability inclusion across employment.

DS11 – Information Governance and GDPR

The disAbility Service continued to maintain high standards of confidentiality, information governance, and GDPR compliance. Operational procedures, secure digital systems, and revised documentation ensured that sensitive disability information continued to be managed appropriately while supporting increasingly integrated service delivery.

Overall Operational Performance

Collectively, the DS1–DS11 operational framework demonstrates a mature and increasingly integrated service model that combines high-volume frontline service delivery with strategic institutional leadership. During 2025–2026 the disAbility Service successfully balanced continued growth in student demand with significant organisational transformation, including digital modernisation, strengthened governance, Universal Design implementation, improved quality assurance, and enhanced cross-University collaboration. These developments position the Service to move beyond a traditional reasonable accommodation model towards a proactive, data-informed, and institutionally embedded approach to accessibility, belonging, and inclusion.

Strategic Achievements

Six interrelated strategic developments defined the work of the disAbility Service during 2025/26. Together, they reflect a continued shift from a primarily reactive model of individual support towards a proactive, digitally enabled and universally designed approach that seeks to remove barriers across the University.

Trinity Access, Belonging, and Inclusion Plan

The development of the Trinity Access, Belonging and Inclusion Plan 2026–2030 was a significant strategic achievement during the year. The plan establishes a coordinated University-wide framework for widening participation, supporting student success, and strengthening belonging across the student journey.

Work during 2025/26 involved consultation and collaboration across the Disability Service, Trinity Access Programmes, academic areas, professional services, student representatives, and senior University governance structures. The process included:

- reviewing participation, retention, and progression evidence;
- identifying barriers experienced by underrepresented and disabled students;
- aligning proposed actions with the Trinity Strategic Plan 2025–2030;
- consulting stakeholders on institutional priorities and responsibilities;
- developing actions, outcomes, indicators, and implementation arrangements;
- clarifying the contribution expected from Schools and professional service areas; and
- progressing the plan through the University's governance and approval processes.

The plan moves access beyond a primary focus on admission. It adopts a whole-student-journey approach encompassing outreach, entry, transition, participation, academic success, belonging, progression, employability, and completion. It recognises that increasing representation must be accompanied by changes to the systems, environments and practices that affect students after they enter Trinity.

Its principal areas of focus include:

- widening participation among underrepresented groups;

- strengthening pathways into Trinity and supporting successful transition;
- improving the experience and outcomes of disabled students;
- embedding Universal Design across teaching, assessment, services, digital systems, and the built environment;
- developing more inclusive and flexible approaches to student support;
- strengthening student belonging, connection and mattering;
- addressing financial, social, cultural, and institutional barriers to participation;
- supporting progression, retention, employability, and successful completion;
- improving institutional data and the monitoring of outcomes;
- recognising intersectionality and the combined effects of disability, socioeconomic disadvantage, and other forms of underrepresentation; and
- establishing shared accountability for access, inclusion and belonging across the University.

The disAbility Service made a substantial contribution to the development of the plan, particularly in relation to disability inclusion, Universal Design, reasonable accommodation, accessible environments, student partnership, data and digital development, and progression into employment. The Service also helped ensure that disabled students lived experience informed the priorities and proposed actions.

The plan provides an important bridge between Trinity's commitments to widening access and its wider ambitions for an inclusive student experience. It establishes access, inclusion and belonging as institutional responsibilities requiring coordinated action across academic, administrative, digital, and physical environments—not matters belonging solely to specialist access or disability services.

Its development also creates a basis for clearer implementation and accountability over the 2026–2030 period. This includes defined actions, institutional ownership, monitoring of participation and student outcomes, and regular reporting through the appropriate governance structures.

Transforming the Student Journey

Project LENS entered a significant new phase through the redesign of disability registration, needs assessment and the communication of reasonable accommodations. The emerging model is intended to ensure that students receive an initial Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) earlier, with standard teaching, learning and examination accommodations identified in advance of key academic deadlines.

The Service developed a more structured pathway spanning pre-entry, registration, transition into university and continued engagement through Semester Two. This included:

- redesigning registration so that supporting documentation and essential student information can be reviewed more efficiently;
- developing an initial LENS based on verified information provided at registration;

- introducing a tiered approach to triage and support, allowing the level of intervention to reflect the student's circumstances;
- prioritising early identification of examination accommodations before the end-of-October examination deadline;
- strengthening communication with Schools, course teams, module coordinators, and disAbility Liaison Officers;
- developing proactive check-ins, workshops and targeted interventions for students who may require additional support; and
- improving the processes for reviewing, updating, and reissuing LENS reports as students' needs or academic contexts change.

The revised approach recognises that not every student requires the same level of one-to-one intervention. It is designed to provide timely standard accommodations at scale while preserving specialist assessment and case management capacity for students experiencing more complex barriers. This development provides the foundation for a more consistent, equitable and sustainable student journey from pre-entry through progression and completion.

Digital Transformation

The implementation of HALO represented a major development in the Service's digital infrastructure. HALO introduced integrated case management across the Disability Service, bringing student communications, referrals, actions, case notes, and workflow management into a more coordinated environment.

This strengthened the Service's ability to:

- allocate and monitor cases through structured workflows;
- coordinate activity across disability, occupational therapy, assistive technology, academic support, and other specialist functions;
- record decisions and actions more consistently;
- reduce reliance on disconnected email and manual tracking processes;
- monitor outstanding tasks and support timely follow-up;
- improve management information, quality assurance, and service governance; and
- support the development of clearer escalation pathways for complex reasonable-accommodation cases.

Work also progressed on enhanced reporting through SITS and Power BI, including more effective monitoring of LENS reports and reasonable accommodations at School and module levels. These developments are intended to help the Service and academic areas identify implementation gaps, emerging demand, and patterns of support more quickly.

HALO is therefore more than a case-recording system. It provides the operational foundation for future digital service development, data-informed planning, and greater assurance that agreed actions are followed through.

Universal Design

Universal Design became increasingly embedded across teaching, learning, assessment, digital systems, and the physical environment. The disAbility Service continued to advocate for accessibility to be addressed at the point where policies, programmes, systems, and spaces are designed, reducing the need for students to repeatedly seek individual adjustments.

The Service contributed to developments in:

- inclusive teaching and assessment practices;
- accessible digital learning environments and learning materials;
- Blackboard Ultra accommodation functionality;
- more consistent examination and assessment procedures;
- sensory-friendly learning, study, and social environments;
- accessible campus development and capital-project planning;
- accessibility auditing and prioritisation of physical works;
- accessible student services and institutional processes; and
- guidance for staff on implementing reasonable accommodations.

The appointment of a dedicated Universal Access Project Manager in Estates & Facilities and the continued development of a multiannual programme of accessibility works strengthened the University's capacity to address physical-access barriers systematically. User-Led Accessibility Audits also provided evidence to inform priorities across teaching buildings, residences, libraries, social spaces, and other parts of the estate.

The approach adopted throughout the year recognised that Universal Design and individual reasonable accommodation are complementary. Universal Design can reduce predictable barriers for the wider student population, while individual accommodations remain essential where a student experiences a disability-related barrier that has not been removed through inclusive mainstream provision.

Student Partnership

The Service further strengthened its Fourth Space approach, creating opportunities for disabled students to contribute as partners, researchers, auditors, and co-designers rather than solely as recipients of support. This work recognises disabled students lived experience as an essential source of knowledge for institutional improvement.

Partnership activity included:

- the continued development of the Trinity Ability Co-op as a disabled-person-led representative and collaborative structure;
- involving students in the co-production of policies, resources, programmes, and service developments;
- expanding User-Led Accessibility Audits across the physical and sensory environment;

- engaging students in research, evaluation, and accessibility-focused internships;
- incorporating student feedback into Project LENS and service redesign;
- supporting student participation in Universal Design and campus-planning discussions; and
- creating routes through which student experience could inform operational decisions and longer-term University strategy.

This approach also contributed to employability by enabling students to develop experience in research, accessibility assessment, project work, communication, and institutional engagement. The disabled-student internship programme further connected inclusion with career development and helped University areas understand how reasonable accommodation and inclusive recruitment can operate in practice.

Student partnership strengthened the quality and relevance of the Service's work by ensuring that solutions were informed by those who encounter institutional barriers directly.

National Leadership

The disAbility Service continued to play a significant role in shaping disability policy and practice across Irish higher education. This national engagement allowed Trinity to contribute its experience while also learning from approaches being developed elsewhere in the sector.

Key areas of national activity included:

- leadership and collaboration through IUA Access Leaders;
- participation in the national review of the Disability Access Route to Education;
- collaboration with the Disability Advisers Working Network;
- leading sectoral workshops on reasonable accommodation and complex accommodation decision-making;
- development of more consistent approaches to non-standard reasonable accommodations;
- benchmarking of Assistive Technology provision across the traditional Irish universities;
- contribution to discussions on inclusive assessment, examination accommodations, and increasing demand;
- research and dissemination relating to Universal Design, accessibility auditing, and disabled-student employability; and
- engagement with national partners on policy, funding, data, and access participation.

A particular focus during the year was the development of clearer, legally informed, and educationally appropriate processes for reasonable accommodations that fall outside established standard arrangements. Trinity contributed to sectoral discussions concerning governance, academic decision-making, essential programme requirements, placements, escalation, recording of decisions and monitoring student outcomes.

This national leadership reinforced the Service's role not only as a provider of student support, but as a contributor to systemic change across higher education.

Overall Strategic Impact

These achievements are closely connected. Project LENS is transforming how students enter and navigate support; HALO provides the infrastructure for coordinated delivery; Universal Design addresses barriers at their source; student partnership ensures that developments are grounded in lived experience; and national collaboration supports consistency and wider systemic reform.

Collectively, they represent a move towards a disAbility Service that is:

- proactive rather than crisis-driven;
- preventative as well as responsive;
- digitally coordinated and evidence-informed;
- based on partnership with disabled students;
- integrated across academic and professional services; and
- focused on institutional responsibility for identifying and removing barriers.

Looking Ahead

The focus for 2026–2027 will be implementation, consolidation, and institutional accountability. The principal priorities are to:

- implementation of the Trinity Access, Belonging, and Inclusion Plan
- embed the redesigned registration, LENS and student-engagement model, ensuring that standard accommodations are communicated early and students requiring additional intervention are identified promptly;
- fully integrate HALO, SITS and Power BI reporting to strengthen case management, quality assurance, and evidence-based planning;
- implement consistent governance for standard and non-standard reasonable accommodations, with clear responsibilities across Schools, Faculties, and central services;
- translate Universal Design into practical improvements across curriculum, assessment, digital learning, student services, and the physical estate;
- strengthen transition, wellbeing, employability, and staff-disability supports through multidisciplinary working and partnership with disabled students and staff; and
- contribute to national policy and sectoral practice in reasonable accommodation, inclusive assessment, and disability participation.

Delivery will require continued Officer sponsorship and clear ownership across Schools, Academic Registry, IT Services, Estates and Facilities, Human Resources, and other professional services. These priorities will support the Trinity Strategic Plan 2025–2030 and the University's emerging plan for access, inclusion and belonging, embedding accessibility as a shared institutional responsibility.