

REPORT ON PROJECT, SYMPOSIUM AND TOOLKIT

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AS PLACES FOR PEOPLE: INCLUSIVE INFRASTRUCTURES TO SUPPORT INTERSECTIONALITY IN HEIs

2026

About the Project

This project explores, via mutual learning exchanges, how intersectionality is, or can be, incorporated into estate planning for city centre or city adjacent higher education institutions (HEIs) with heritage listed buildings. The project goal is to identify best and promising practices and build towards a sectoral community of practice. All "HEIs as Places for People" partners (Trinity College Dublin, Royal College Surgeons Ireland, Technological University Dublin, and University of Galway) have buildings listed on the National Built Heritage Service site; we are mindful of our heritage status and conservation obligations while ensuring we plan forward in considering the needs of current and future students and staff.

While recent years have seen an increased obligation to interrogate accessibility across all equality grounds and incorporate a Universal Design approach in the built environment, HEIs still face practical hurdles in implementing these methods on heritage campuses. To resolve the tension between these obligations, this project seeks to build a cross-sectoral HEI network to support work on issues of reimagining historic spaces to meet the current and future needs of an inclusive learning community.

In facilitating these opportunities for intentional cross-disciplinary exchanges, we aim to strengthen relationships between Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Access, and Estates offices and reframe ongoing conversations through an intersectional lens.

The symposium brought together learnings from the three mutual learning events (MLEs) hosted in RCSI (July 2025), TU Dublin (November 2025) and University of Galway in (February 2026), incorporates feedback and suggestions from the project partners and participants arising from these events, and contributions from across the sector including from Dublin City Council; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Vision Ireland and University of Edinburgh.

At our symposium, partners from Trinity College Dublin, University of Galway, TU Dublin and RCSI shared key learnings from campus site visits and project work since summer 2025, highlighting practical approaches to Universal Design and intersectional inclusion in higher education spaces.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Project Co-Ordination

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin: Professor Lorraine Leeson (Project Lead) Vice President for Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (VP-EEDI), Professor in Deaf Studies; Dr Siobán O'Brien Green, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); Susan Cantwell, Project Administrator, EDI Office.

Project Partners

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland: Liz Hughes, Associate Director - Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Jenny Duffy, Equality Project Officer; Larissa Henriques, EDI Engagement Coordinator.

Technological University of Dublin: Professor Yvonne Galligan MRIA, Emerita Fellow; Collette Burns RIAI, Architectural Lead for Campus Planning; Rebecca Grogan, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Senior Manager.

University of Galway: Dr Deirdre McHugh, Universal Design and Accessibility Manager; Dr Helen Maher, Vice President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Tara Flanagan, Inclusive Environment Project Officer.

Project Funders

Higher Education Authority (HEA) Centre for Excellence in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Dr Jennie Rothwell, Laura Austin and Sarah Hurley.

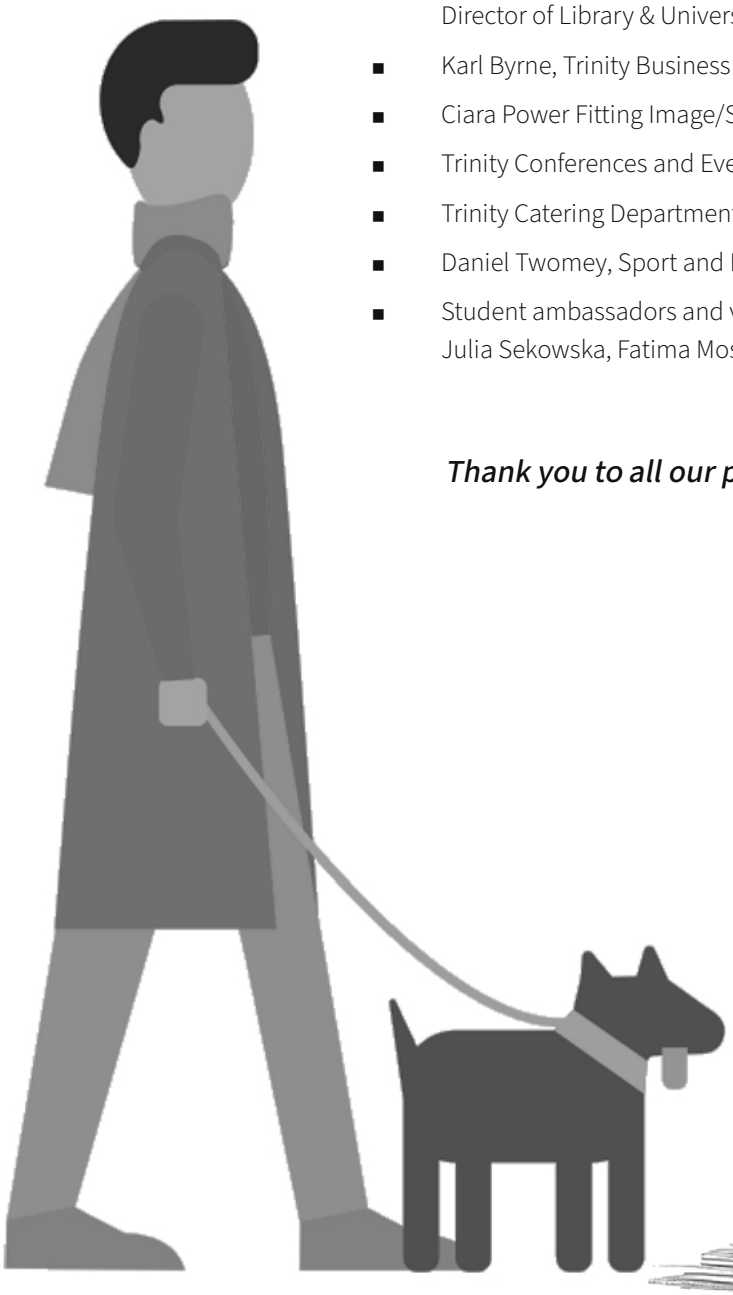
Trinity College Dublin

- Joel McKeever
- Sam Williams
- Mac Sizeland
- Karl Byrne, Trinity Business School
- Ciara Power Fitting Image/Stacked

Project and Symposium Assistance, Expertise and Support

- Rob Curley, President, Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI)
- David Forde, Dublin City Council
- Emma Geoghegan Head of Architecture, TU Dublin
- Nicola Matthews, Senior Architect, National Built Heritage Services Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Jamie Millar, Policy Officer, Vison Ireland
- Karl Mitchell, Dublin City Council
- Conor Sreenan, State Architect and Principal Architect, Office of Public Works (OPW)
- Jeremy Upton Vice-Chair Coimbra Group Heritage Working Group, Director of Library & University Collections, University of Edinburgh
- Karl Byrne, Trinity Business School
- Ciara Power Fitting Image/Stacked
- Trinity Conferences and Events
- Trinity Catering Department
- Daniel Twomey, Sport and Physical Activity Inclusion Officer, Trinity Sport
- Student ambassadors and volunteers: Magdalena Schmit, Julia Sekowska, Fatima Moses and Oscar Schmidt.

Thank you to all our presenters.





Foreword

Higher education institutions are, above all else, places for people. They are environments where teaching, learning, research, creativity and innovation take place, and where diverse communities come together to shape ideas, relationships and futures. Yet too often, the systems through which we plan, manage and improve these environments remain divided into silos. Heritage is considered in one context, equality and inclusion in another, while estates management, accessibility, transport and public policy are frequently treated as separate concerns. When this happens, opportunities to build meaningful connections between these areas can be lost.

The ***Higher Education Institutions as Places for People: Inclusive Infrastructures to Support Intersectionality in HEIs*** project sought to open up that conversation. Inspired by the national architecture policy *Places for People,* the project recognised that universities are not simply collections of buildings but living, evolving spaces that are experienced differently by different people. Its purpose was to examine how legislation, policy, professional practice and lived experience intersect, and how these intersections can help us create more inclusive and accessible higher education environments.

Central to the project was a broader understanding of accessibility. Too often, accessibility is reduced to questions of physical access to buildings. While this remains critically important, accessibility encompasses much more than ramps, lifts and doorways. Through this project, we considered accessibility through the lens of intersectionality, recognising that people experience the world through multiple and overlapping identities, circumstances and needs.

For one person, accessibility may involve navigating public transport as a wheelchair user while also managing the practical realities of being a new parent. For another, it may mean coping with reduced mobility while working or studying in a historic building without lift access. Others may experience barriers relating to sensory needs, safety, caring responsibilities, language, culture, age or socio-economic background. These are not abstract concepts; they are the everyday realities of students, staff and visitors across our campuses. As participants throughout this project repeatedly observed, many of our environments continue to create barriers that limit full participation in higher education and wider society.

Over the past year, our work has been guided by three overarching themes: understanding the scope of the challenge, exploring the art of the possible, and considering the future through the lens of Universal Design. Together, these themes have encouraged us to examine how higher education institutions can move beyond compliance-driven approaches and towards creating environments that are welcoming, intuitive and inclusive for the widest possible range of users.

It is particularly fitting that this symposium took place at Trinity College Dublin, an institution whose history illustrates both the challenges of exclusion and the possibilities of change. Like many historic universities, Trinity was established for a relatively narrow section of society. The experiences of women within the institution provide a powerful example of how inclusion evolves over time. From the restrictive conditions placed on women when they were first admitted as students in 1904, to subsequent advances in academic participation, residential access, childcare provision, widening participation initiatives and disability supports, the story of Trinity reflects a gradual but significant expansion of who belongs within the university community.

Importantly, these changes have always had a physical dimension. Decisions about buildings, spaces and infrastructure shape how people experience inclusion in practice. Whether considering accessible alarms and spaces that allow for private conversations in a sign language in Deaf Studies facilities, the design of learning environments, or the pathways that now cut through Trinity's Front Square, the lesson is clear: inclusion is not an abstract principle. It must be designed, tested, experienced and refined through ongoing engagement with those who use our spaces every day.

The pathways across Front Square offer a particularly powerful illustration of this principle. They represent a shift from designing for an imagined user towards designing for lived experience. Today they support movement for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids, prams and other supports, reflecting a more inclusive understanding of how public spaces are used. Such interventions remind us that accessibility and inclusion are not simply technical issues; they are expressions of who we expect, welcome and value within our institutions.

Universities often speak of equality, diversity and inclusion as core values. However, these values are not static achievements. They require continual attention, investment and imagination. They require us to challenge assumptions, listen to lived experiences and recognise that our environments can either enable or constrain participation.

The ***Higher Education Institutions as Places for People*** project asks us to view our campuses through this broader lens. It invites us to see universities not merely as physical estates but as places shaped by people, policy, history and intersectional experiences. If the history of our institutions teaches us anything, it is that change is both necessary and possible. Achieving it requires collaboration, persistence and a willingness to imagine environments that work for everyone.

This report reflects that ongoing journey. It is both a record of collective reflection and a call to action. Most importantly, it is an invitation to continue working together to ensure that our higher education institutions are truly places for people.

Professor Lorraine Leeson

Vice President for Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Trinity College Dublin

Contents

About the Project 2
Acknowledgements and Thanks 3
Foreword 5
Contents 7
Symposium Programme 8
Welcome 11

SESSION 1. **Keynote - HEIs as Places for People:** 13

SESSION 2. **Panel Discussion: Getting to and Through University** 19

SESSION 3. **Making Trinity College More Inclusive for All: an 'Insider's View'** 23

SESSION 4. **"Just One Thing" 3-minute Lightning Talks** 31

SESSION 5. **Panel Discussion: Universal Design & the Built Heritage Environment** 35

SESSION 6. **From Learning to Action** 39

Toolkit 43

APPENDIX 1. **Deliverable 1: Learning Note from Mutual Learning Exchange (MLE) No. 1 – Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)** 49

APPENDIX 2. **Deliverable 2: Learning Note from Mutual Learning Exchange (MLE) No. 1 – Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)** 54

APPENDIX 3. **Deliverable 3: Report on Mutual Learning Event (MLE) 2: The Art of the Possible** 57

APPENDIX 4. **Deliverable 4: Learning Note from MLE No. 2 at TU Dublin** 66

APPENDIX 5. **Deliverable 5: Mutual Learning Event (MLE) 3: The Future is Universal Design** 69

APPENDIX 6. **Deliverable 6: Learning Note from MLE No. 3 at University of Galway** 77

APPENDIX 7. **Deliverable 7: List of resources to support future work** 80

Symposium Programme

20 MAY 2026

10:00	Registration
10.30	Welcome and opening address - Prof Lorraine Leeson, Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Trinity College Dublin
10.45-11:30	Keynote - HEIs as Places for People: Navigating the intersections of legislation, policy and experience through Universal Design
	Chair: Liz Hughes Associate Director - Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, RCSI
	Dr Deirdre McHugh, Universal Design Manager, University of Galway
Comfort Break/Active Break 11:30-11:40 **Daniel Twomey, Sport & Physical Activity Inclusion Officer, TCD**	
11:40-12:40	Panel Discussion – Getting to and Through University
	Chair: Brian Caulfield Professor in Transportation, Trinity College Dublin
	Catherine Brophy-Walsh Public Domain Officer, Dublin City Council
	Jamie Millar Policy Officer, Wayfinding Centre, Vision Ireland
	Q&A
12:40-13:00	Keynote - Making Trinity College More Inclusive for All: an 'Insider's View'.
	Chair: Dr Siobán O'Brien Green Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Trinity College Dublin
	Mike Clark Director Estates and Facilities, Trinity College Dublin
Lunch and Poster Session 13:00-13:45	
13:45-14:30	"Just One Thing" 3-minute Lightning Talks
	Chair: Professor Yvonne Galligan MRIA, Emerita Fellow, TU Dublin
	Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare Assistant Professor Social Policy, TCD
	Cristina Boccardo Undergraduate Student Support Officer TCD, Jennifer Ndukwe TCD Student
	Faolán Doecke-Launders TCD Student Society DUNES
	Emmanuella Okafor, Beauty Ihekwereme TCD Students and Filmmakers
	Andrew Darcy, Student ASIAP TCPID, TCD
	Izzy Ó Tighearnán, University of Galway Student



14:30-15:30	Panel Discussion: Universal Design & the Built Heritage Environment
	Chair: Collette Burns RIAI, Architectural Lead for Campus Planning, TU Dublin
	Nicola Matthews Senior Architect, National Built Heritage Services, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
	Declan Treanor Director, disAbility Service, TCD
	Emma Geoghegan Head of the Discipline of Architecture, TU Dublin
	Jeremy Upton Vice-Chair Coimbra Group Heritage Working Group, Director of Library & University Collections, University of Edinburgh
	Q&A
Comfort Break/Active Break 15:30-15:40 Daniel Twomey, Sport & Physical Activity Inclusion Officer, TCD	
15:40-16:10	From Learning to Action: Reflections from project partners and next steps
16:10-16:15	Farewell and close




Prof. Lorraine Leeson
WELCOME AND OPENING
Change is Possible
A place to sign privately
A Place to Rest
Cobblestones = A challenge!
HEA HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
Trinity College Dublin
RCSI ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND
TU DUBLIN
Ollscoil na Gaillimhe University of Galway

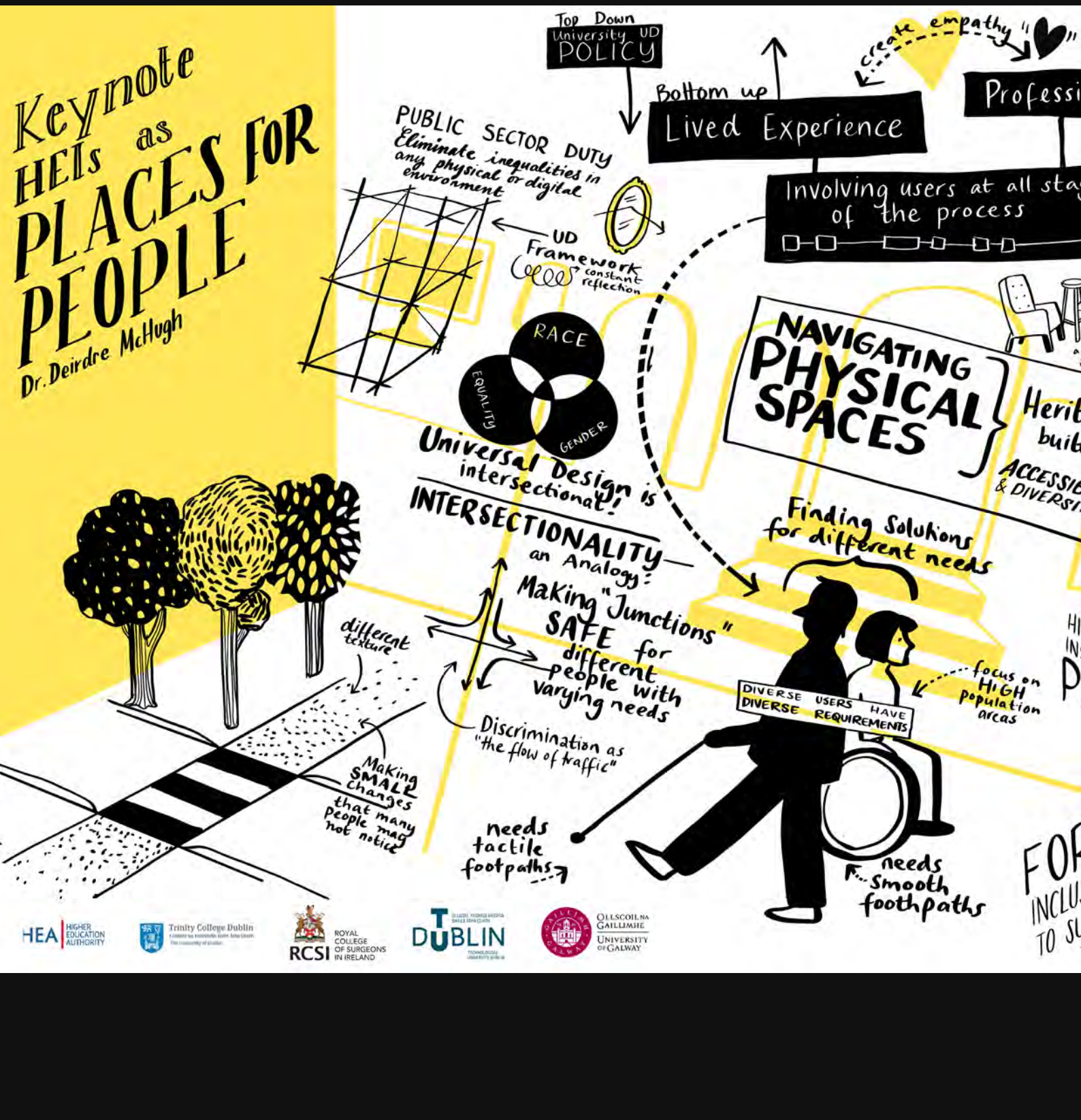


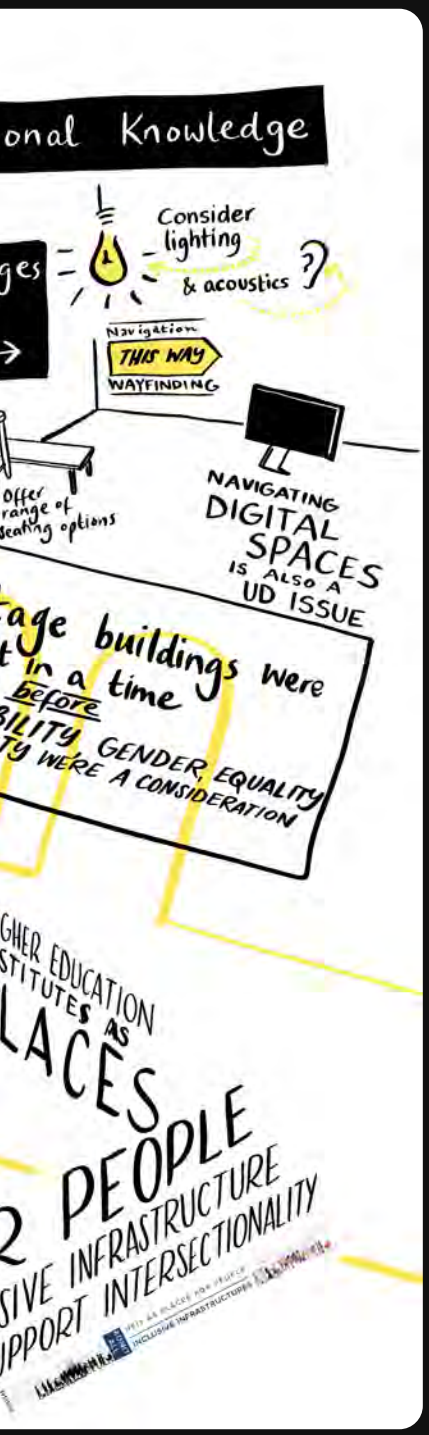
Welcome

Dr Linda Doyle,
Provost and President, Trinity College Dublin

Prof Lorraine Leeson,
Vice President for Equity, Equality,
Diversity and Inclusion

The symposium opened with a message of welcome from Trinity College Provost Dr Linda Doyle. Then Prof Lorraine Leeson, Vice President for Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at Trinity College Dublin welcomed the more than 100 delegates in attendance from across higher education, public sector and non-governmental organisations.


Keynote
HEIs as
PLACES FOR
PEOPLE
Dr. Deirdre McHugh
Top Down
University UD
POLICY
Bottom up
Lived Experience
create empathy
Professi
Involving users at all sta
of the process
PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY
Eliminate inequalities in
any physical or digital
environment
UD
Framework
constant
reflection
RACE
EQUALITY
GENDER
Universal Design is
intersectional!
INTERSECTIONALITY
an Analogy:
Making "Junctions"
SAFE for
different
people with
varying needs
Discrimination as
"the flow of traffic"
NAVIGATING
PHYSICAL
SPACES
Herit
buil
ACCESSIB
& DIVERSI
Finding Solutions
for different needs
DIVERSE USERS HAVE
DIVERSE REQUIREMENTS
focus on
HIGH
population
areas
different
texture
Making
SMALL
changes
that many
people may
not notice
needs
tactile
footpaths
needs
smooth
foothpaths
FOR
INCLU
TO SU
HEA
HIGHER
EDUCATION
AUTHORITY
Trinity College Dublin
RCSI
ROYAL
COLLEGE
OF SURGEONS
IN IRELAND
DUBLIN
OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY



SESSION 1

Keynote - HEIs as Places for People:

Navigating the intersections of legislation, policy and experience through Universal Design

Dr Deirdre McHugh
Universal Design Manager, University of Galway.

Dr Mc Hugh explored the role of Universal Design (UD) in creating more inclusive, accessible, and equitable higher education environments. She reported that universities are increasingly required to navigate the intersections of legislation, policy, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and lived experience when planning and managing their campuses. Dr Mc Hugh argued that accessibility should not be viewed solely as a compliance obligation but rather as a fundamental aspect of creating campuses that work for everyone.

Dr Mc Hugh noted that many Irish universities possess extensive historic estates that were designed before contemporary considerations of accessibility, gender equality, and diversity became established priorities. As a result, institutions face significant challenges in addressing physical, digital, and cultural barriers while also protecting and maintaining the heritage value of their campuses. She highlighted the increasing collaboration between EDI, disability support, access, estates, and facilities teams across the sector as institutions respond to obligations under the Public Sector Duty, Athena Swan commitments, and the National Access Plan.

Universal Design and Intersectionality

A key theme of the presentation was the relationship between Universal Design and intersectionality. Drawing on Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on intersectionality, Dr Mc Hugh explained that people often experience disadvantage through the interaction of multiple factors rather than through a single aspect of their identity. She used the analogy of a traffic intersection to illustrate how different forms of discrimination and exclusion can converge and affect individuals in complex ways.

Dr Mc Hugh reported that Universal Design provides an inherently intersectional framework because it seeks to accommodate the broadest possible range of users from the outset. She emphasised that accessibility challenges are rarely experienced in isolation and that effective solutions must acknowledge the diversity of people's experiences across gender, race, disability, age, socio-economic background, and other dimensions of identity.

Recognising and Embracing Diversity

Dr Mc Hugh stressed the importance of recognising diversity as the norm rather than the exception. Referencing work from Crowd4Access, she noted that different users experience the built environment in different ways. Wheelchair users may require level access and ramps, people with visual impairments may require on tactile paving and colour contrast, individuals using crutches may benefit from shorter crossing distances, while parents with buggies often encounter challenges when navigating built environments and streetscapes. She argued that this diversity of needs reinforces the importance of Universal Design principles. Rather than creating separate solutions for different groups, institutions should seek to create environments that are intuitive, accessible, and usable for as many people as possible. Dr Mc Hugh suggested that improvements designed to support one group frequently improve the experience for the wider community.

The Scope of the Challenge

Dr Mc Hugh reported that higher education institutions face substantial responsibilities under the Public Sector Duty. She noted that universities must identify and eliminate inequalities within their physical and digital environments and regularly assess potential risks relating to discrimination and human rights infringements. Dr Mc Hugh noted that Universal Design offers a practical framework through which these responsibilities can be addressed systematically. She emphasised that accessibility should not be limited to individual buildings but should encompass entire campus ecosystems, including streetscapes, transport connections, external spaces, digital platforms, and services. In her view, universities must consider how people move through and experience these interconnected environments if they are to create truly inclusive campuses.

Addressing the Challenge through Institutional Culture

A significant message is that Universal Design is fundamentally a process rather than a one-time intervention. Dr Mc Hugh noted that an effective Universal Design approach requires an institutional culture that encourages continuous reflection and engagement throughout the design and decision-making process. She warned against confining user consultation to a single project stage or treating accessibility as a retrospective exercise. Instead, she advocated for an approach that embeds consultation, evaluation, and responsiveness throughout the lifecycle of projects. According to Dr Mc Hugh, this requires institutions to foster collaboration between professional experts, service providers, and users, ensuring that accessibility considerations remain central to strategic planning and project delivery.

The Art of the Possible

Dr Mc Hugh used several examples to demonstrate what can be achieved when Universal Design principles are integrated into campus design and development. She highlighted 26 York Street, Dublin, part of RCSI, as an example of a building that successfully combines heritage and contemporary design while incorporating accessibility features such as varied seating options, acoustic treatments, and carefully designed lighting arrangements.

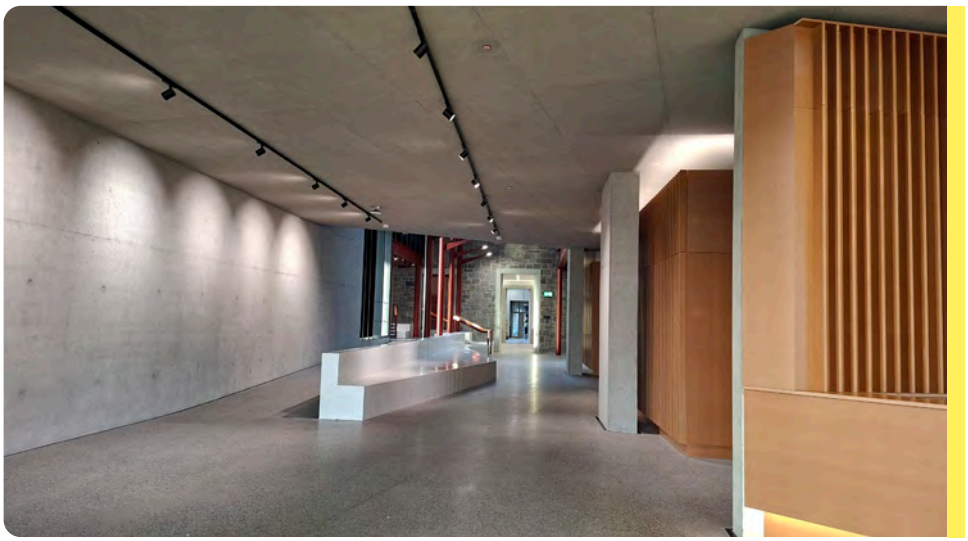


Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - 26 York Street where a range of seating options and acoustic panels and lighting reflect Universal Design thinking

Dr Mc Hugh noted that wayfinding and navigation represent increasingly important aspects of inclusive campus design. As campuses become larger and more complex, users require environments that are intuitive and easy to navigate. She highlighted the potential of emerging technologies, training programmes, and user support mechanisms to improve navigation and reduce barriers to participation. She also highlighted examples from TU Dublin that demonstrate how Universal Design principles can be translated into practice across different campus settings and services. These examples illustrated the value of embedding accessibility into everyday operational and design decisions.



TU Dublin, Grangegorman Campus – accessible pathways and seating by design



TU Dublin, Grangegorman Campus – accessible circulation and seating by design

The Future of Universal Design in Higher Education

Looking ahead, Dr Mc Hugh argued that the future of accessibility in higher education lies in the widespread adoption of Universal Design principles. She stated that institutions need to examine challenges through multiple lenses in order to appreciate both broad systemic issues and individual lived experiences. In her view, effective Universal Design requires universities to balance policy requirements, professional expertise, and practical realities while remaining focused on the needs of campus users.

Dr Mc Hugh identified three priorities for future progress:

- centring lived experience,
- engaging professional knowledge and expertise,
- and amplifying the student voice.

She suggested that these elements are essential for ensuring that accessibility initiatives are meaningful, sustainable, and responsive to the diverse needs of university communities. She further noted that lived

experience should be treated as a form of expertise in its own right. By involving students, staff, and visitors in decision-making processes, institutions can develop more effective and user-centred solutions while avoiding assumptions about what users need.

Universal Design at the Intersections

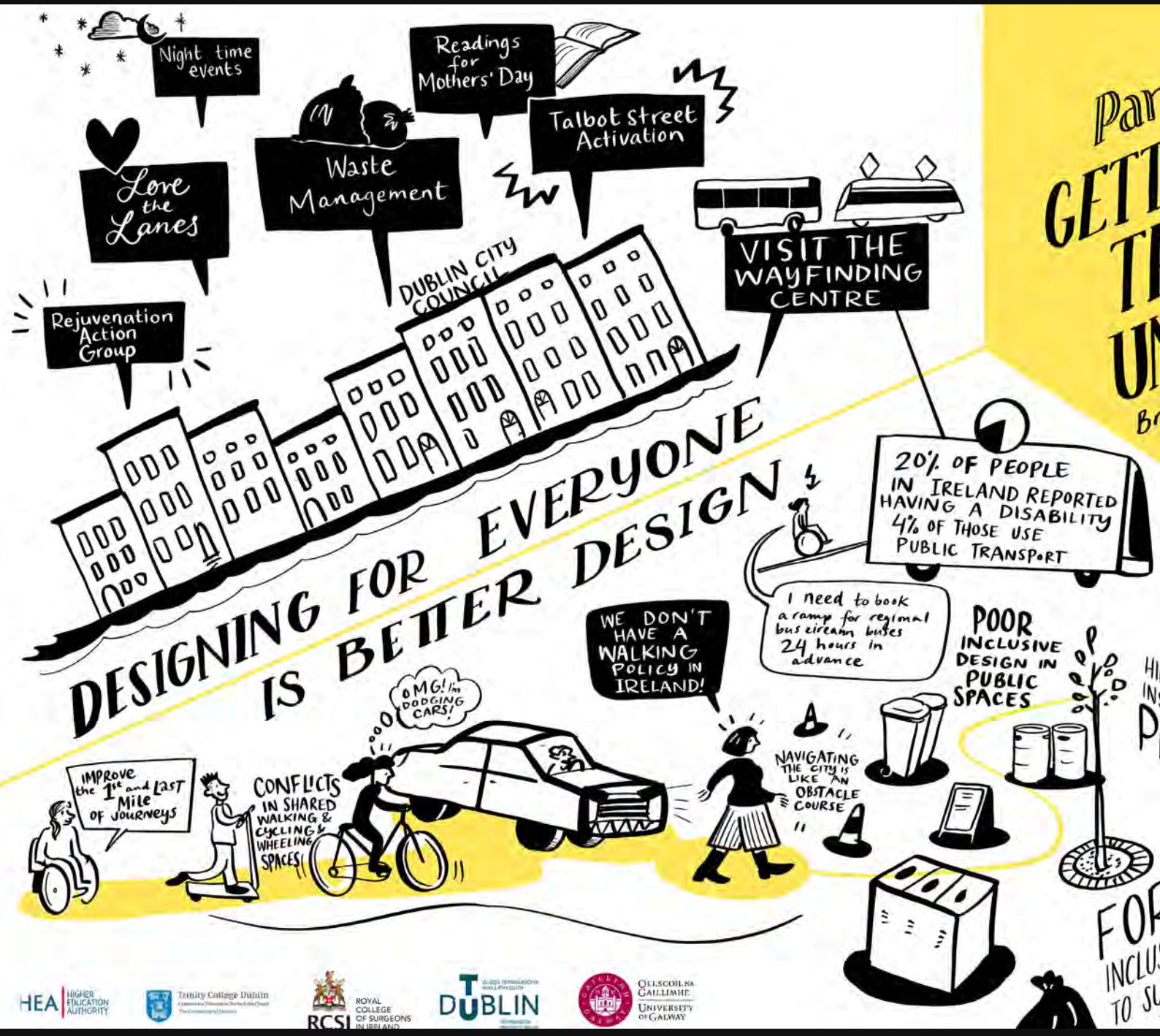
In concluding her presentation, Dr Mc Hugh returned to the concept of intersections as both a physical and conceptual framework for understanding accessibility. She suggested that Universal Design operates at the intersection of policy, legislation, professional practice, lived experience, and the physical environment. Success therefore depends on recognising the interdependence of these elements and ensuring that they inform one another.

Conclusion

Dr Mc Hugh concluded that Universal Design provides higher education institutions with a powerful framework for addressing accessibility, equality, and inclusion in a comprehensive and sustainable way. She argued that universities must move beyond viewing accessibility as a matter of compliance and instead embrace an approach that recognises diversity, values lived experience, and places users at the centre of decision-making.

The presentation demonstrated that while universities face significant challenges arising from historic estates, complex environments, and evolving user expectations, meaningful progress is achievable through collaboration, consultation, and continuous improvement. Dr Mc Hugh's overarching message was that the future of higher education campuses lies in creating environments that work for everyone. By embedding Universal Design throughout planning, policy, and practice, institutions can become genuinely inclusive places for people and support full participation across their communities.





HEA Higher Education Authority · Trinity College Dublin · Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland · TU Dublin · Ollscoil na Gaillimhe University of Galway



SESSION 2

Panel Discussion: Getting to and Through University

Professor Brian Caulfield
Professor in Transportation,
Trinity College Dublin

Catherine Brophy-Walsh
Public Domain Officer, Dublin City Council

Jamie Millar
Policy Officer, Vision Ireland, Wayfinding Centre.

This panel discussion explored the concept of the university journey as a continuous experience extending from home to the lecture theatre, rather than a series of separate stages. Drawing on perspectives from transport, urban planning, campus design, and accessibility, panellists considered the barriers faced by diverse users and the opportunities for creating more inclusive and connected environments. The Wayfinding Centre, whose mission is to make public transport in Ireland accessible to all through immersive training, research and co-design, provided an important framework for the discussion by highlighting that access to transport is a fundamental enabler of participation in education and wider society.

A central theme was the existence of disconnects throughout the journey to university. Panellists noted that while individual elements such as public transport, streets, and campus facilities may be designed to meet accessibility requirements, they often operate in isolation. This can create significant challenges for students, staff, and visitors, particularly those with disabilities or additional access needs. Drawing directly on examples from The Wayfinding Centre, participants reflected on how cluttered footpaths, poorly installed tactile paving, inaccessible travel information, and complex assistance-booking procedures can undermine independent travel and create barriers long before a person reaches campus. The discussion emphasised that accessibility must be considered as a seamless, end-to-end process rather than a collection of isolated interventions.

Dublin City Council outlined a significant programme of public realm and streetscape improvements aimed at creating a more walkable, accessible, sustainable, and people-centred city centre. Through its City Centre Public Realm Master Plan and a range of individual projects, the Council is reimagining streets, squares, and civic spaces by prioritising pedestrians, cyclists, universal accessibility, greening, and high-quality public spaces. Key initiatives include the transformation of College Green, improvements to the Grafton Street Quarter, upgrades to Meath Street and Temple Bar, and enhanced pedestrian environments along major city routes. These projects seek to reduce the dominance of vehicle traffic, improve connections between neighbourhoods and destinations, and create safer and more welcoming public spaces for residents, workers, students, and visitors.

A strong emphasis is being placed on accessibility and inclusive design. Dublin City Council's Public Realm Strategy recognises that streets must work for people of all ages and abilities, with improved footpaths, crossings, wayfinding, seating, lighting, and universal access measures incorporated into redevelopment schemes. The Council is also investing in active travel infrastructure, including safer walking and cycling routes that improve connections between the city centre, transport hubs, educational institutions, and surrounding communities. Recent projects such as the Clontarf to City Centre Active Travel Scheme have delivered upgraded pedestrian facilities and high-quality public realm enhancements designed to make everyday journeys safer and more comfortable.

These initiatives align closely with wider efforts to rejuvenate Dublin city centre and create a vibrant, attractive, and accessible urban environment. Working alongside national agencies and local stakeholders including city-centre Higher Education Institutions, Dublin City Council is promoting a vision of streets as places for people rather than simply movement corridors. The overall objective is to enhance quality of life, support economic and social activity, encourage sustainable transport choices, and ensure that the city centre is welcoming and accessible for everyone.

The relationship between transport systems and university campuses was identified as a key area for improvement. Panellists highlighted the importance of smooth transitions between public transport networks, surrounding streets, and campus entrances. While significant investment has been made in transport infrastructure, breakdowns often occur at the points where different systems and organisations intersect. The transition from city to campus was described as particularly important, with participants noting that campus edges and peripheries can be difficult to navigate and may lack clear wayfinding, accessible routes, or welcoming public realm design. Drawing on its experience as a national accessibility and transport training facility, The Wayfinding Centre demonstrated how collaboration between transport operators, built-environment professionals, educators, policy-makers,

and users can help address these challenges and create more coherent journeys. At present, however, they noted that while 20% of people in Ireland report having a disability, only 4% of these currently access public transport.

Discussion also focused on the difficulties people encounter once they arrive on campus. Large, historic, or complex university environments can be challenging to navigate, particularly for first-time visitors, international students, and people with sensory, cognitive, or mobility-related needs. Panellists stressed that effective wayfinding is about more than signage; it requires intuitive routes, clear visual cues, digital navigation tools, and environments that reduce stress and uncertainty. Examples from The Wayfinding Centre illustrated how sensory maps, visual guides, hearing loop systems, quiet spaces, and technologies such as NaviLens can support independent navigation and improve user experience for a wide range of users. Creating campuses that are easy to understand and move through benefits all users, not only those who identify as having specific access needs.

A recurring message throughout the discussion was the need to move beyond minimum compliance with accessibility standards. While regulations provide an important foundation, panellists argued that genuinely inclusive environments require a broader commitment to Universal Design principles. This means designing journeys, spaces, and services that are intuitive, welcoming, and usable by the widest possible range of people from the outset, rather than relying on adaptations or specialist solutions after the fact. This message closely reflected The Wayfinding Centre's advocacy for inclusive design, professional development, and the establishment of accessibility benchmarks that encourage organisations to strive for best practice rather than simply meeting regulatory requirements.

The value of lived experience was highlighted as a critical factor in achieving these goals. Panellists advocated for the active involvement of students and staff with disabilities and other access needs in shaping policies, projects, and design decisions. Co-design approaches were seen as essential for identifying barriers that may not be apparent to designers, planners, or decision-makers and for ensuring that solutions respond to real-world experiences. In this regard, The Wayfinding Centre's Access Ambassador programme was highlighted as a particularly powerful model, placing people with lived experience of disability at the centre of training, testing, evaluation and co-design activities.

The panel agreed that responsibility for accessibility must be shared across universities, transport providers, local authorities, and other stakeholders. Success will depend on stronger coordination, earlier collaboration, and a commitment to viewing accessibility as a holistic journey. The discussion reinforced the importance of creating connected, inclusive, and user-centred environments that enable everyone to access and fully participate in university life.

A key takeaway from the session was the contribution of The Wayfinding Centre in demonstrating how partnership working, lived experience, and Universal Design can help close the accessibility gap and support more equitable access for all.







SESSION 3: KEYNOTE

Making Trinity College More Inclusive for All: an ‘Insider’s View’



Mr Mike Clark

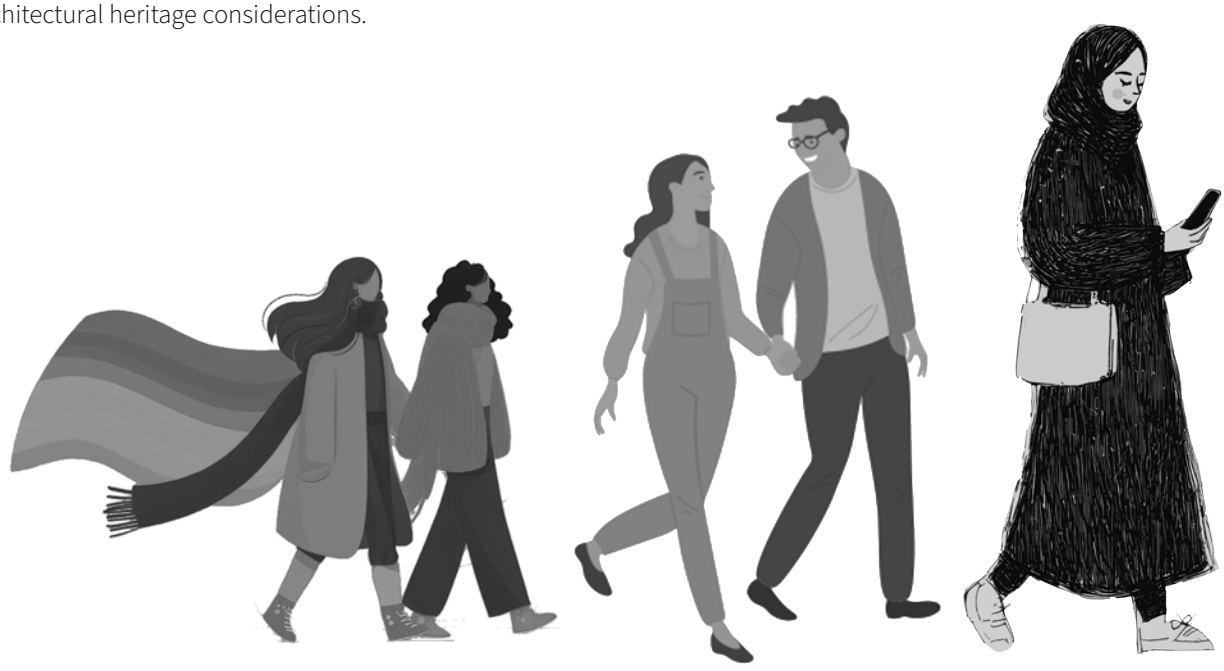
Director of Campus Infrastructure,
Trinity College Dublin

Mr Clark outlined the university's ongoing efforts to improve accessibility and inclusivity across its extensive and historically significant estate. He highlighted the complexity of delivering universal access across a distributed campus on 108 acres of land. Trinity College Dublin's campus includes 167 buildings, 25% of which are more than 200 years old and 68% are over 100 years old. Many of these are protected heritage structures. The College has 1832 directly owned student bedspaces and there are 120 lifts across the estate.



A same scale view of Trinity College Dublin's sites (Allies and Morrison Architects)

Through a series of case studies, including Front Square, the Exam Hall/Public Theatre, Provost's House, Printing House, and other campus developments, the presentation demonstrated how Trinity is balancing accessibility requirements with conservation and architectural heritage considerations.



Exam Hall/Public Theatre and College Chapel



Pathways added to Front Square in 2008/9, line up with the Campanile.



Left to right: Lift at the Exam Hall/Public Theatre and the Chapel.

Mr Clark noted that the lifts installed at the Exam Hall/ Public Theatre and Chapel (2018) were sunk into the ground, offering a technical solution[1]: on paper, they looked ideal. However, as a result of many encounters with heavy vehicles and VIP's limousines, they were damaged, rendered inoperable and were subsequently decommissioned.

Mr Clark described how the College Registrar and the Estates and Facilities team worked with Howley Hayes Cooney Architects to develop a brief through analysis primarily centred on the role of the Public Theatre during Trinity's Commencements events. An instance where heritage management and ambitions around accessibility are in tension is identifiable here: the historic significance of the Chapel and the Exam Hall, designed by Sir William Chambers, precluded any consideration of ramps to the front elevations, with the current ramp, serving as a temporary measure.

1 https://universitytimes.ie/2018/07/concealed-cobblestoned-wheelchair-lifts-to-be-installed-in-front-square/



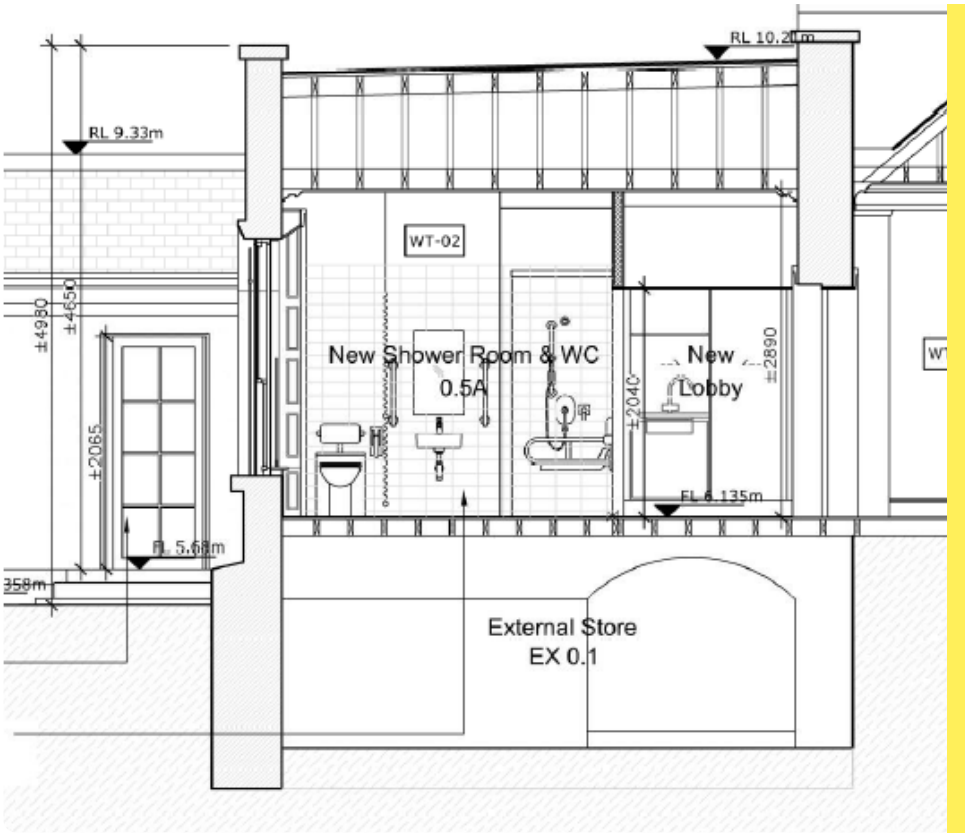
Left to right: the original ramp at the Public Theatre and the current temporary ramp (with access behind the small blue van).

The Provost's House

The Provost's House (No. 1 Grafton Street) dates from 1759 and is known for both its architectural splendour and its limited accessibility. The current Provost, Dr Linda Doyle was adamant that a solution could be found to provide much improved access to the Provost's House and also to provide accessible toilet facilities within the House. Thus, the Provost, members of the Provost's Office, and the Estates and Facilities team, have been working with Fitzgerald Kavanagh and Partners (FKP) Architects to develop viable solutions, with work currently in train (Summer 2026).



No. 1 Grafton Street – Provost's House, Trinity College Dublin



Accessible WC and Shower Room in No. 1 Grafton St.

Amongst the renovations, an accessible toilet and shower will be installed in what was a former office.

The Printing House

Another major body of ongoing work relates to the Old Library Redevelopment Project, which entailed a major refurbishment of The Printing House. Designed and built around 1734, this building housed the Dublin University Press until 1976. The distinctive red 'bolt on' structure allows for level access into the building that is now an exhibition space. This is a demountable structure with a lifespan mirroring that of the overall programme to renovate the Old Library.



Accessible entrance to The Printing House, Trinity College Dublin (2025)

Printing House Square

Printing House Square is the first new public square added to the University in a century. Designed by McCullough Mulvin Architects, it opened in Autumn 2023. The space is home to the disAbility Service, Health Centre, and provides 250 student bedrooms, alongside some sporting facilities. It creates a 'new' square and also serves as a gateway between the university and Dublin City's Pearse Street. The building has 3 basement levels and the vertical circulation and external ramps were carefully considered to maintain a positive experience for occupants and visitors alike. However, there were challenges encountered with lift access. The fully enclosed lift can be clearly seen in the image below, but an uncovered platform lift has proved to be less successful and options are currently being considered.



Printing House Square, Trinity College Dublin – Ramp on right hand side leads to lift.

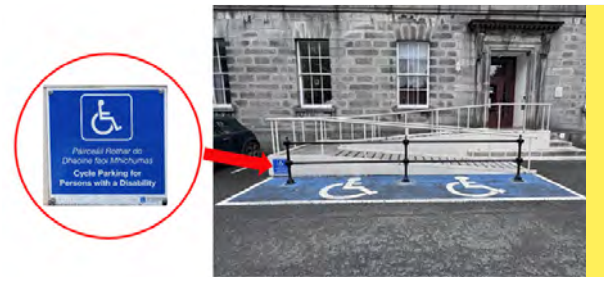


The Museum Building, Trinity College Dublin

The Museum Building

The Museum Building, designed by Deane and Woodward, was completed in 1857 and has undergone significant change since then. Casey and Wyse-Jackson (2019) report that when originally completed, the building had office accommodation for just four staff. By the time they published their volume on the Museum Building in 2019, there were over 100 staff working in the building. Despite the changes to use across the centuries, no lift has been installed in the building and there are currently only 3 female and 4 male toilets for the whole building.

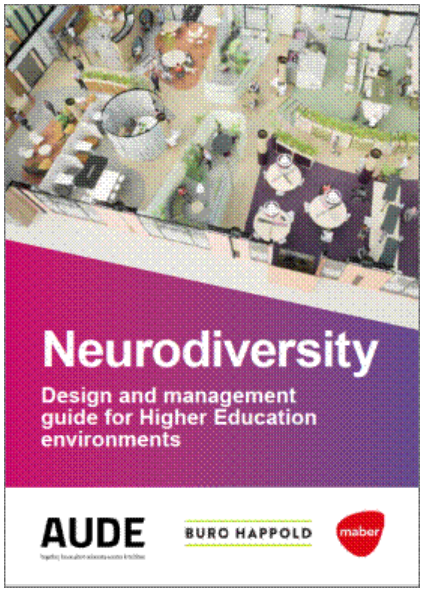
Mr Clark noted that while much of the work required to ensure accessibility demands significant investment, there are also ways of improving a heritage estate which are lower cost and yet impactful. For example, the installation of clearly marked disabled cycle parking spaces at Trinity College Dublin.



Disabled Cycle Parking Spaces at Trintiy College Dublin

Neurodiversity and Estate Planning

There is also a need for us to consider neurodivergence when planning our estates. Referencing "Neurodiversity – A design and management guide for higher education environments", prepared and published by the Association of University Directors of Estates, he outlined how Trinity has created a number of dedicated student 'Sense Spaces'. Mr Clarke also noted that of the College's c. 329,000m^2 of space, circa 50,000m^2 is office space and similar consideration to provision is required across these spaces too.



A state of the art example referenced is the new CISCO London office space, which, Mr Clark noted, is seen as the benchmark for neuroinclusive office space. As CISCO notes,

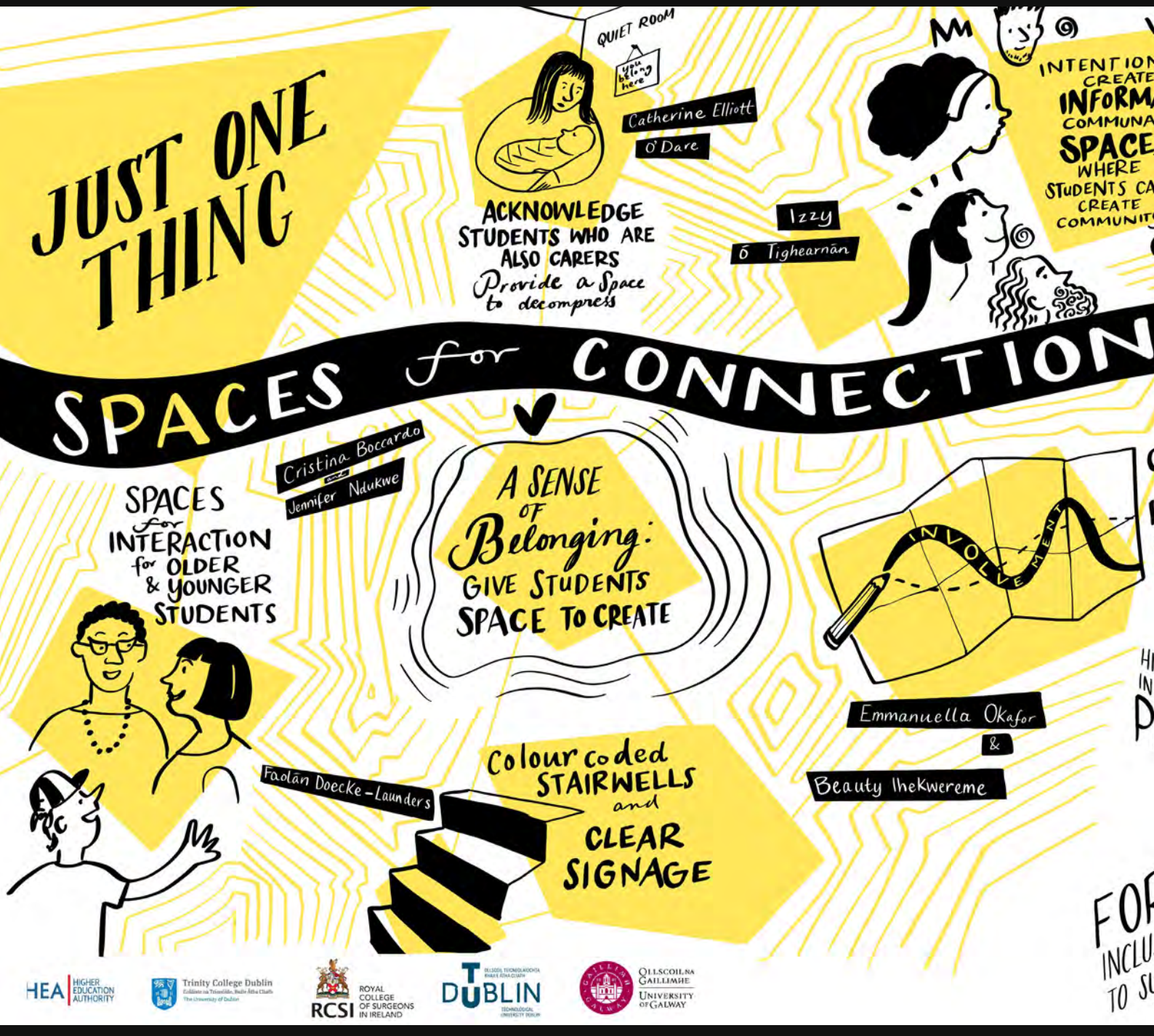
"When the idea emerged to provide a workplace that was intentionally designed to create neuroinclusion, we launched an internal study to better understand what truly makes a space neuroinclusive and, ultimately, we discovered a gap. While our offices were built for collaboration, they didn't always support the full spectrum of how people think, process and recharge. With this project, we wanted to bridge that gap and create working environments where every type of mind and every mode of work could thrive."[2]

Conclusions

Mr Clark touched on key themes which included the importance of moving beyond temporary or compromised accessibility solutions towards permanent, high-quality interventions; embedding Universal Design principles in all future projects; and recognising that meaningful improvements do not always require major capital investment. The presentation also acknowledged the challenges of legacy buildings, where structural constraints can make accessibility upgrades particularly difficult. Looking ahead, Trinity is expanding its focus from physical accessibility to broader inclusivity, including the needs of neurodivergent students and staff. Initiatives such as dedicated sensory spaces, accessibility design guidance, support from the Trinity disAbility Hub, and dedicated project management resources were identified as important steps in maintaining momentum.

The presentation illustrated Trinity College Dublin's commitment to creating a more accessible and inclusive environment for all users while respecting the unique character and heritage of its campus.

2 https://blogs.cisco.com/news/built-for-whats-next-designing-human-centered-workplaces-in-the-modern-age


JUST ONE THING
QUIET ROOM
you belong here
Catherine Elliott
O'Dare
ACKNOWLEDGE STUDENTS WHO ARE ALSO CARERS
Provide a Space to decompress
Izzy
ó Tighearnán
INTENTION
CREATE
INFORM
COMMUNA
SPACE
WHERE
STUDENTS CA
CREATE
COMMUNIT
SPACES for CONNECTION
Cristina Boccardo
&
Jennifer Ndukwe
SPACES for INTERACTION for OLDER & YOUNGER STUDENTS
A SENSE of Belonging: GIVE STUDENTS SPACE TO CREATE
INVOLVEMENT
Emmanuella Okafor
&
Beauty Ihekwereme
Faolán Doecke-Launders
Colour coded STAIRWELLS and CLEAR SIGNAGE
FOR
INCLU
TO SU



SESSION 4

“Just One Thing” 3-minute Lightning Talks

Professor Yvonne Galligan MRIA,
Emerita Fellow, TU Dublin (Chair)

Dr Catherine Elliott O’Dare
Assistant Professor Social Policy, TCD

Cristina Boccardo
Undergraduate Student Support Officer TCD,

Jennifer Ndukwe
TCD Student

Faolán Doecke-Launders
TCD Student Society DUNES

Emmanuella Okafor, Beauty Ihekwereme
TCD Students and Filmmakers;

Andrew Darcy,
Student ASIAP TCPID, TCD

Izzy Ó Tighearnán
University of Galway Student



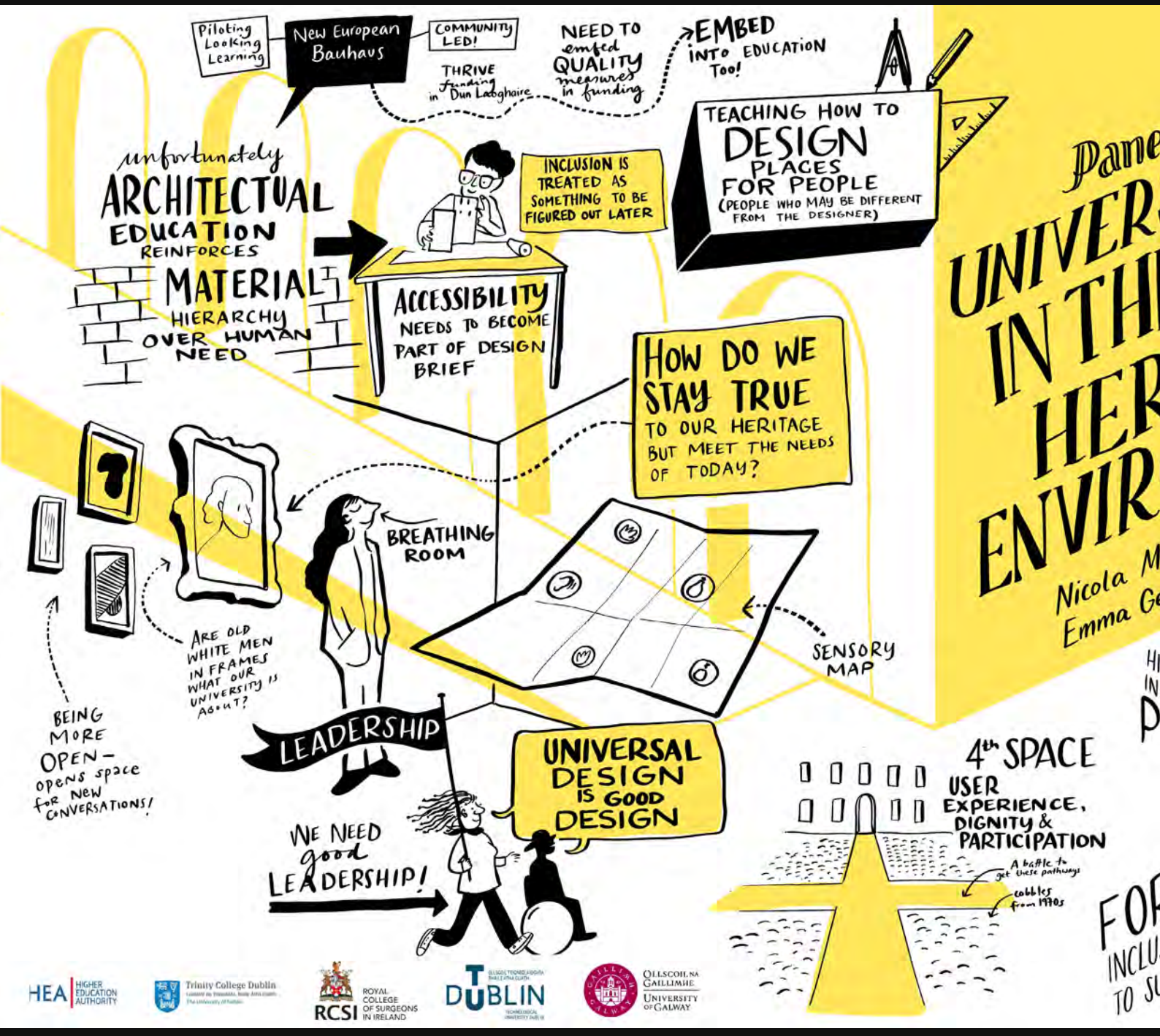
A key dynamic feature of the afternoon programme was the *"Just One Thing"* lightning talk session, chaired by Professor Yvonne Galligan. The session brought together academics, professional staff, and students from across the project partnership to offer concise reflections on how campus infrastructure affects different equality groups and to propose practical interventions to improve inclusion. Collectively, the presentations demonstrated the value of drawing on both professional expertise and lived experience when designing more equitable higher education environments

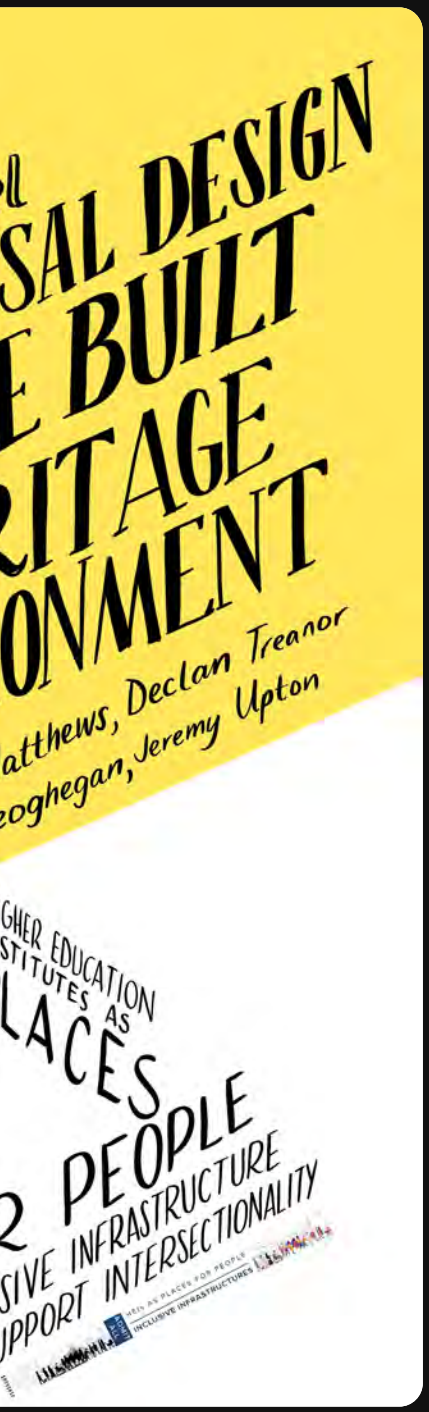
Several speakers focused on access, participation, and wellbeing. Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare discussed issues relating to inequality and social inclusion, calling for spaces for intergenerational interaction on our campuses. Cristina Boccardo highlighted the importance of student support services and accessible pathways to assistance alongside Jennifer Ndukwe, who contributed the perspective of a student parent and graduate of the Trinity Access Programme, underscoring the need for campus infrastructure and services that recognise the diversity of students' personal and caring responsibilities.

Student voices formed a central part of the discussion. Faolán Doecke-Launders spoke from the perspective of neurodivergent students and disability advocates, emphasising accessibility and inclusive educational environments including, for example, colour coded stairwells and clear signage. Emmanuella Okafor and Beauty Ihekwereme reflected on themes of identity, culture and belonging through insights developed in their documentary short film *Cultures in Conversation,* noting how few spaces are accessible for student events and calling for the creation of infrastructure that facilitates the genuine involvement of students. Building on this theme, Andrew Darcy highlighted the importance of inclusive education pathways and meaningful participation for students with intellectual disabilities as well as the challenges of wayfinding to get to lectures, and Izzy Ó Tighearnán shared student-led perspectives on accessibility and inclusion from the University of Galway. Together, these contributions reinforced the principle that campus design should be informed by the experiences of those who use it every day, with a key theme emerging of the need for higher education institutions to intentionally create flexible, informal communal spaces where students and staff can create community.

The session concluded with a strong message that relatively small, practical changes to the built environment can have a significant impact on inclusion. Across the presentations, speakers emphasised that Universal Design, accessibility, and intersectional approaches should be embedded in campus planning and development from the outset rather than treated as afterthoughts. The discussion reflected the broader goals of the project: creating higher education spaces where all students, staff, and visitors can participate fully, feel represented, and experience a genuine sense of belonging.


RCSI


Piloting Looking Learning
New European Bauhaus
COMMUNITY LED!
THRIVE in Dun Laoghaire
NEED TO embed QUALITY measures in funding
EMBED INTO EDUCATION Too!
unfortunately
ARCHITECTUAL EDUCATION REINFORCES MATERIAL HIERARCHY OVER HUMAN NEED
INCLUSION IS TREATED AS SOMETHING TO BE FIGURED OUT LATER
TEACHING HOW TO DESIGN PLACES FOR PEOPLE (PEOPLE WHO MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM THE DESIGNER)
ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS TO BECOME PART OF DESIGN BRIEF
HOW DO WE STAY TRUE TO OUR HERITAGE BUT MEET THE NEEDS OF TODAY?
BREATHING ROOM
ARE OLD WHITE MEN IN FRAMES WHAT OUR UNIVERSITY IS ABOUT?
SENSORY MAP
BEING MORE OPEN – opens space for new CONVERSATIONS!
LEADERSHIP
UNIVERSAL DESIGN IS GOOD DESIGN
WE NEED good LEADERSHIP!
4th SPACE
USER EXPERIENCE, DIGNITY & PARTICIPATION
A battle to get these pathways
cobbles from 1990s
Pane
UNIVER
IN TH
HER
ENVIR
Nicola M
Emma Ge
HEA HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
Trinity College Dublin
RCSI ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND
TU DUBLIN
OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



SESSION 5

Panel Discussion: Universal Design & the Built Heritage Environment

Collette Burns RIAI
Architectural Lead for Campus Planning, TU Dublin (Chair)

Nicola Matthews
Senior Architect, National Built Heritage Services, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Declan Treanor
Director, disAbility Service, TCD

Emma Geoghegan
Head of Architecture, TU Dublin

Jeremy Upton
Vice-Chair Coimbra Group Heritage Working Group, Director of Library & University Collections, University of Edinburgh

This panel explored the opportunities and challenges involved in creating inclusive, accessible spaces within historic and heritage settings. Panellists reflected on the relationship between accessibility, conservation, and design excellence, emphasising that these objectives should not be viewed as competing priorities. Instead, the discussion highlighted a growing understanding that Universal Design and heritage conservation can be mutually reinforcing, ensuring that historic environments remain relevant, welcoming, and usable for diverse communities while preserving their cultural and architectural significance.

A central theme of the discussion was the need to bridge the gap between policy ambition and practical implementation. Drawing on the principles of Ireland's national architecture policy, *'Places for People',* panellists considered how quality design, sustainability, and inclusivity can be more effectively embedded within projects involving historic and heritage buildings. Nicola Matthews highlighted the contemporary European Union New European Bauhaus initiative, which promotes design approaches that are sustainable, inclusive, beautiful, and community-led. Panellists argued that these principles provide a valuable framework for heritage projects, demonstrating that accessibility should be integrated from the outset as a core design objective rather than addressed later as a compliance requirement. The discussion also emphasised the importance of embedding quality measures and inclusive outcomes into funding mechanisms in order to drive long-term change.

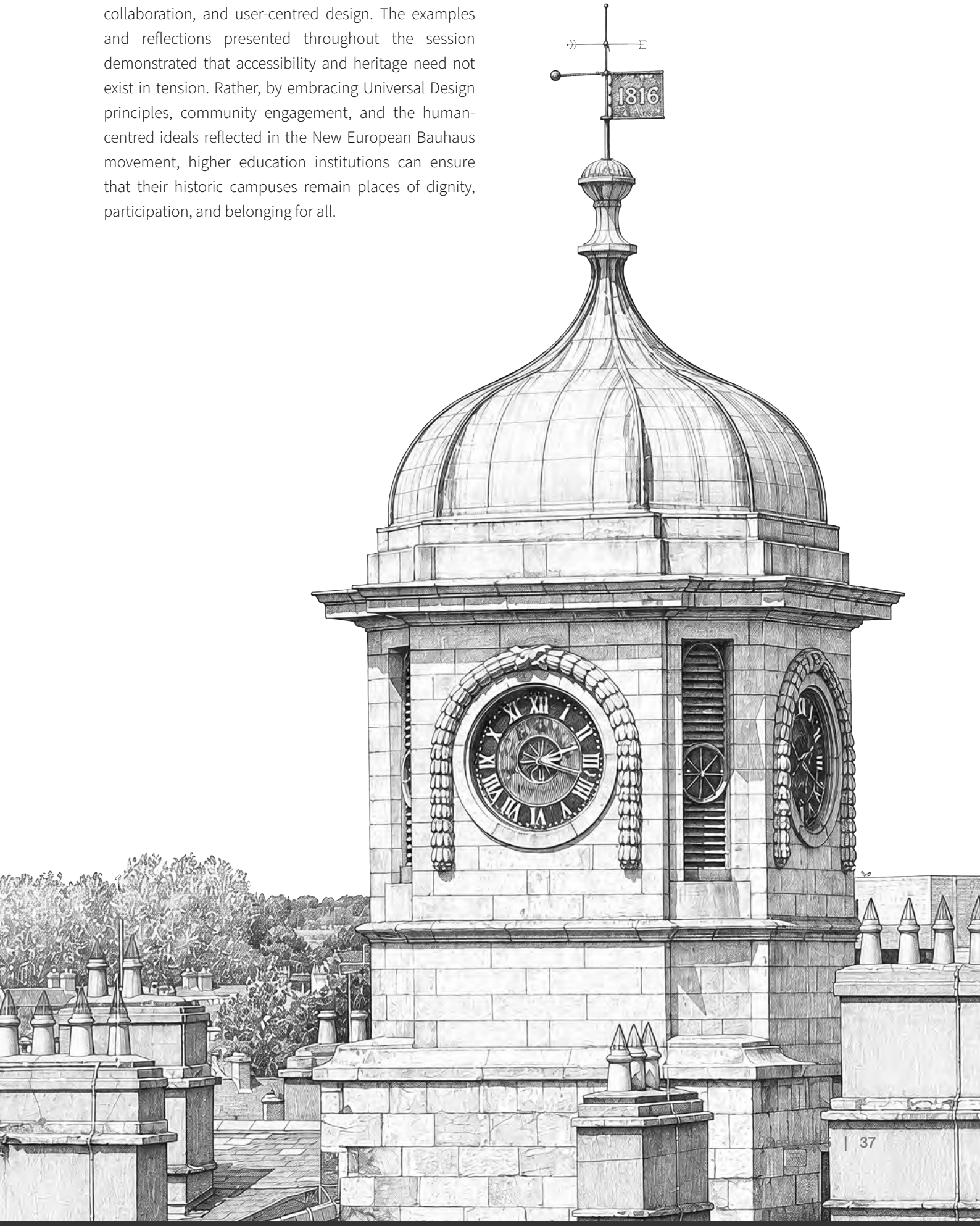
Panellists highlighted the role of architectural education and professional culture in shaping future practice, with Emma Geoghegan noting that traditional architectural education has often prioritised materiality, aesthetics, and technical considerations while treating inclusion as something to be addressed retrospectively. Echoing comments captured during the session, participants argued that accessibility must become a fundamental element of the design brief and that student architects should be taught how to design places for people whose experiences and needs may differ from their own. Universal Design was presented not as a specialist discipline but as an essential design mindset that should be embedded throughout architectural and planning education.

Several contributions focused on the importance of understanding lived experience and designing for the full range of human interaction with space. Concepts such as sensory mapping, the provision of quiet or breathing spaces, and consideration of the emotional and experiential dimensions of the built environment were highlighted as examples of how Universal Design extends beyond physical access. Discussion of the "fourth space" concept emphasised user experience, dignity, participation, and belonging as critical measures of success. Panellists stressed that heritage environments should not simply be accessible in a technical sense but should also enable people to participate fully, navigate confidently, and feel welcomed within institutional spaces.

The panel also explored how universities can become more open and representative environments. Questions were raised about whose histories, identities, and experiences are reflected within heritage settings, prompting discussion about interpretation, representation, and opportunities for new conversations. Examples from the University of Edinburgh were shared where choice of art in heritage building settings can augment spaces and promote belonging. Participants emphasised the value of co-design and meaningful consultation with people who experience barriers in the built environment, arguing that lived experience must inform decision-making at every stage of project development. Strong leadership was identified as a critical factor in achieving this shift, with panellists noting that institutional commitment is necessary to move inclusion from aspiration to action. As one key message emerging from the discussion suggested, "Universal Design is good design": when spaces are designed to support the widest possible range of users, the result is a better environment for everyone.



The discussion concluded with a shared view that the future of heritage environments lies in balancing conservation with inclusion through creativity, collaboration, and user-centred design. The examples and reflections presented throughout the session demonstrated that accessibility and heritage need not exist in tension. Rather, by embracing Universal Design principles, community engagement, and the human-centred ideals reflected in the New European Bauhaus movement, higher education institutions can ensure that their historic campuses remain places of dignity, participation, and belonging for all.





HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
Trinity College Dublin
RCSI ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND
TU DUBLIN
OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



SESSION 6

From Learning to Action

Reflections from Project Partners and Next Steps

Prof. Lorraine Leeson
(Chair)

Dr Helen Maher
Vice President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Galway

Rebecca Grogan
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Senior Manager, TU Dublin

Liz Hughes
Associate Director and Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, RCSI

The closing panel discussion provided an opportunity to synthesise key insights emerging from the project and to consider how these lessons can be translated into lasting institutional change. Panel members reflected on the project's central finding that the physical environment of higher education institutions plays a critical role in shaping experiences of inclusion, participation, and belonging. Drawing on campus site visits, collaborative learning, and engagement with staff and students across partner institutions, the project demonstrated that campus infrastructure is not neutral; rather, it can either facilitate or hinder access and engagement for different groups within the university community. A recurring theme was that data alone cannot provide a complete picture of inclusion. Participants noted that stories and lived experiences help to illuminate the data and deepen understanding of how institutional environments are encountered by different members of the university community. The discussion strongly endorsed the principle of treating experience as expertise, recognising that those who navigate barriers in higher education are often best placed to identify practical and meaningful solutions.

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the importance of adopting an intersectional approach to campus design and development. Panellists noted that while Universal Design principles provide an important foundation, the experiences shared throughout the symposium highlighted the need to consider how disability, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, caring responsibilities, neurodiversity, and other dimensions of identity intersect to influence how individuals experience university spaces. The diverse perspectives presented during the "Just One Thing" lightning talks reinforced the value of embedding lived experience into planning and decision-making processes, ensuring that those most affected by barriers are actively involved in identifying solutions. Participants also reflected on the importance of cultivating empathy within institutions and of using institutional influence and resources empathetically to support meaningful change. Through this lens, inclusion was viewed not simply as a technical or policy challenge, but as a process of creating environments where all members of the university community can experience dignity, participation, and a genuine sense of belonging.

Project partners reflected on the significance of collaboration across the higher education sector. The partnership between Trinity College Dublin, Technological University Dublin, the University of Galway, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland enabled institutions to share challenges, examples of good practice, and innovative approaches to creating more inclusive campus environments (e.g. the Humanarium at RCSI, offering a space for collaboration; the accessible study outdoor pods at the University of Galway).



Accessible collaboration pod at University of Galway

Particular reference was made to the value of openness and collaboration, both within and across institutions, and to opportunities for shared learning through initiatives such as inter-institutional networks and demonstration projects. Discussion highlighted the importance of creating spaces where theory and practice can inform one another, ensuring that research findings are translated into practical action and that policy development is grounded in lived experience and evidence.

Panellists posed an important question for the sector: how can higher education institutions collectively shape policy in this area so that inclusion becomes embedded within funding mechanisms, capital planning processes, and institutional governance structures?

Looking ahead, the discussion focused on moving from awareness to implementation. Panellists highlighted opportunities to apply the project's findings to future campus developments, refurbishment projects, and policy initiatives, particularly within historic and heritage-built environments where accessibility challenges can be especially complex. The need for ongoing consultation with students, staff, and underrepresented groups was identified as essential to ensuring that progress remains responsive to evolving needs. The challenge of securing funding for much-needed infrastructural change, while also re-evaluating how heritage spaces can be made genuinely accessible, was also discussed. At the same time, panellists reflected on the importance of fostering institutional pride in inclusive practice, recognising that accessible and welcoming campuses strengthen not only participation but also the identity and values of universities themselves.

The panel concluded on a positive and forward-looking note, emphasising that the project has established a strong foundation for future work in inclusive infrastructure across the higher education sector. By combining research, partnership, data, and lived experience, the initiative has produced valuable insights that can inform policy and practice well beyond the lifetime of the project. The challenge for institutions now is to build on this momentum, ensuring that inclusion is considered not as an additional requirement but as a fundamental principle in the design and development of higher education environments.

Next project steps include the preparation of a concise toolkit highlighting examples of good practice, practical resources, and opportunities for further multidisciplinary, cross-institutional, and cross-sectoral engagement.

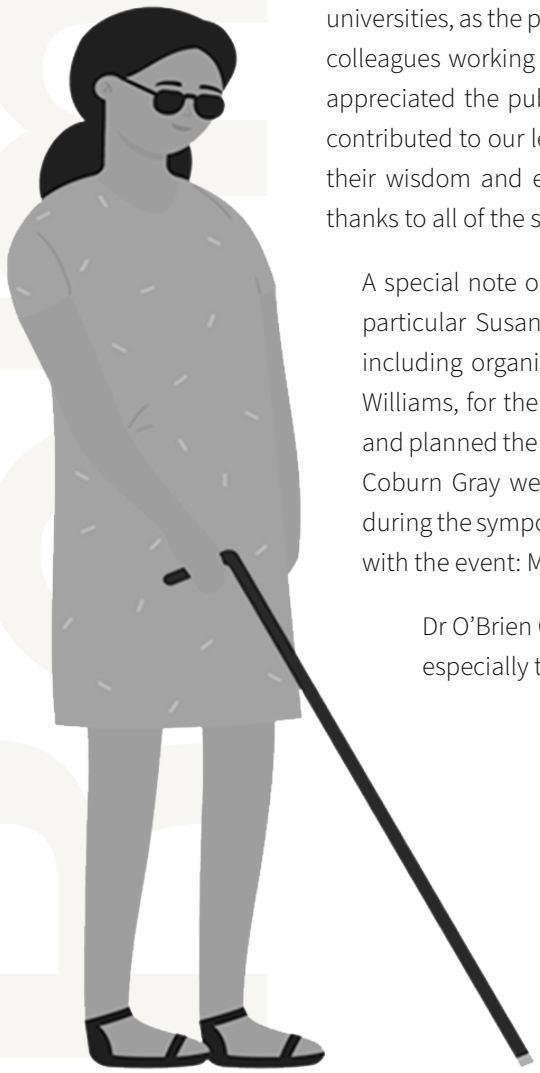
Professor Leeson also noted that, as a result of the cross-disciplinary discussions that took place over the course of the project, in the academic year 2026/27, Trinity College Dublin will launch a design initiative challenging architects to reimagine the university's historic campus through a human rights and Universal Design lens. The initiative will invite participants to explore whether perceived tensions between heritage conservation and human rights can be reconciled through creative and inclusive design approaches. Moving beyond minimum regulatory compliance, architects will be encouraged to consider how historic buildings can better support accessibility, participation, dignity, and belonging. Drawing on policy frameworks including *Places for People,* the National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People, and the Programme for Government, and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the initiative will seek to stimulate new thinking about how heritage environments can reflect contemporary values of equality, diversity, inclusion, and community participation. The project will also provide an opportunity to translate the symposium's key themes into practice, demonstrating how collaborative, human-centred design can act as a catalyst for both institutional change and wider social inclusion.

Closing Remarks

Dr Siobán O'Brien Green

Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Trinity College Dublin

Dr O'Brien Green thanked all of those who made this project such a collaborative, productive and inspirational experience, including our funders, the Higher Education Authority who granted funding through their HEA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Enhancement Fund in late 2024 to the project. She thanked the project partners (RCSI, TU Dublin and UG) who have been wonderful to work with and exceptional hosts for the three project mutual learning events (MLEs) and campus site visits. She also thanked our colleagues across our universities, as the project provided an opportunity to connect with colleagues and to meet colleagues working in our HEIs whom we may not have worked with or met before. She appreciated the public sector and non-governmental organisation colleagues who have contributed to our learning on this topic across the past year and who have kindly shared their wisdom and experiences at the project MLEs and the symposium, and particular thanks to all of the students who have helped plan and implement the project activities.



A special note of thanks was offered to the Trinity College Dublin EDI Office team, in particular Susan Cantwell, for her ongoing excellent project administration support, including organisation of the MLEs and the symposium, also to Joel McKeever, Sam Williams, for their assistance and to Mac Sizeland who worked on the project in 2025 and planned the first MLE in RCSI. Bernadette Ferguson, Gemma Shannon and Caoimhe Coburn Gray were thanked for providing Irish Sign Language/ English interpretation during the symposium as well as the student ambassadors and volunteers who assisted with the event: Magdalena Schmit, Julia Sekowska, Fatima Moses and Oscar Schmidt.

Dr O'Brien Green thanked all the symposium attendees, especially the presenters and closed the event.



Toolkit

Making Heritage Spaces Accessible Through Cross-Institutional and City Engagement

1. Purpose

This toolkit provides a practical resource and framework for higher education institutions that wish to improve accessibility in heritage environments while building meaningful partnerships across the higher education sector, local authorities, transport providers, heritage bodies, disability organisations, and community stakeholders. It is grounded in the key findings of the **Higher Education Institutions as Places for People: Inclusive Infrastructures to Support Intersectionality in HEIs** project, which demonstrated that accessibility is not simply a matter of building compliance but a question of participation, dignity, belonging, and human rights. This project commenced in 2025 and was funded by the Higher Education Authority who granted funding through their HEA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Enhancement Fund and led by Trinity College Dublin.

2. Guiding Principles

Before commencing any work, institutions should commit to the following principles:

01.

Treat Experience as Expertise

Lived experience should be valued alongside professional and technical expertise. Students, staff, visitors and community members who experience barriers are essential contributors to decision-making.

02.

Adopt an Intersectional Lens

Accessibility should be considered across multiple dimensions including disability, age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, caring responsibilities, language, religion, culture and neurodiversity.

03.

View Accessibility as a Journey

Accessibility begins before a person reaches campus and extends throughout the student or staff experience. Campuses should be considered within their wider city and transport context.

04.

Universal Design is Good Design

Accessibility should be embedded from the outset and not added retrospectively as a compliance exercise.

05.

Heritage and Inclusion are Complementary

Historic significance and accessibility should be approached as mutually reinforcing objectives rather than competing interests.

3. Step-by-Step Framework

STEP 1.

Build an Internal Coalition

Create a working group that includes:

- Estates and facilities
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion office
- Disability and access services
- Student representatives
- Academic subject-matter experts
- Campus planning teams
- Sustainability representatives
- Heritage and conservation specialists

Key Question: Who is missing from decisions about the built environment?

Output: Cross-functional working group with an agreed terms of reference and time frames.

STEP 2:

Map Partnerships Beyond the Institution

Identify external stakeholders:

- Local authority and city planners (including Access/Heritage/Equality Officers)
- Heritage and conservation bodies
- Transport providers and authorities
- Disability organisations
- Civic organisations
- Other higher education institutions
- National policy bodies
- Local residents' groups

The project found significant value in collaboration between universities, local government, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) and organisations such as AHEAD, Vision Ireland and The Wayfinding Centre.

Output: Stakeholder map and engagement plan.

STEP 3:

Understand the User Journey

Map journeys:

- Public and private transport to and from campus
- Campus entrances
- Building access
- Internal navigation and signage
- Social and informal spaces

Consider:

- Commuting time and implications of same for staff and students
- Physical barriers
- Sensory barriers
- Information barriers
- Cultural barriers
- Safety concerns
- Wayfinding challenges

Accessibility failures often occur at the intersection between systems and routes rather than within individual buildings.

Output: Accessibility journey map.

STEP 4:

Gather Experience-Based Evidence

Use multiple methods:

- Walking audits
- Access audits
- Story collection
- Focus groups
- Sensory mapping exercises
- Photo diaries
- Student and staff workshops and consultations

Ask participants:

- Where do you feel excluded?
- Where do you feel welcome?
- Where do you stop participating?
- What would make the biggest difference?

Remember: Stories illuminate data.

Output: Lived experience evidence report.

STEP 5:

Audit Heritage Spaces Through a Universal Design Lens

Move beyond regulatory compliance and ask:

- Can everyone enter?
- Can everyone navigate independently?
- Can everyone participate equally?
- Are bathroom/breastfeeding/prayer/sensory spaces/teaching spaces/labs/libraries/sports facilities/student and staff service spaces accessible?
- Can everyone feel they belong?

Consider:

- Wayfinding
- Lighting
- Seating
- Acoustics
- Quiet spaces
- Toilet provision
- Drinking water access
- Digital navigation
- Waiting and social spaces

The project highlighted sensory mapping and "fourth space" thinking as valuable tools for understanding user experience, dignity and belonging.

Output: Universal Design Heritage Review.

STEP 6:

Create Demonstration Projects

Start small.

Examples include:

- Improved wayfinding
- Colour-coded navigation systems
- Quiet rooms or sensory spaces
- Accessible seating
- Inclusive social spaces
- Intergenerational spaces
- Heritage interpretation redesign
- Accessible cycle facilities
- Enhanced campus gateways and entrances

The project repeatedly demonstrated that relatively small interventions can produce significant impacts.

Output: Pilot project portfolio.

STEP 7:

Develop Shared Learning Networks

Establish:

- Inter-university community of practice
- Annual site visits
- Shared case studies
- Joint workshops
- Student exchanges
- Design challenges

An important outcome of the project was the value of mutual learning exchanges and demonstration projects across institutions in addition to sharing successes and challenges to learn from.

Output: Regional or national network.

STEP 8:

Embed Inclusion in Capital Planning

Require all projects to demonstrate:

- Universal Design considerations
- User engagement
- Heritage impact assessment
- Equality and human rights considerations
- Wayfinding strategy
- Neuroinclusive design considerations

Accessibility should become part of the design brief, not an afterthought.

Output: Inclusive Capital Project Framework.

STEP 9:

Influence Policy and Funding

Work collectively to advocate for:

- Universal Design funding streams
- Heritage accessibility grants
- Inclusive planning guidance
- Shared procurement standards
- National accessibility benchmarks

The project repeatedly highlighted the need to embed inclusion into governance and funding mechanisms.

Output: Joint policy and advocacy agenda.

STEP 10:

Measure Success Differently

Do not only measure:

- Number of ramps
- Number of lifts
- Compliance rates

Also measure:

- Sense of belonging
- User confidence
- Participation levels
- Wayfinding success
- Community engagement
- Satisfaction with heritage spaces

Ask: "Can people participate with dignity?" rather than merely "Can people gain access?"

Output: Inclusive Heritage Impact Framework.



4. Practical Checklist

Before starting any heritage accessibility project, ask:

- ☐ Have people with lived experience been involved from the beginning?
- ☐ Have we considered intersectionality?
- ☐ Have we mapped the journey from city to campus?
- ☐ Are local authority partners and other relevant organisations involved?
- ☐ Have we considered sensory and neuroinclusive design?
- ☐ Are we balancing conservation and inclusion creatively?
- ☐ Is this intervention improving dignity and belonging?
- ☐ Are we learning from other institutions?
- ☐ Have we identified quick wins and longer-term ambitions?
- ☐ Have we planned how success will be measured?

5. Recommended Outcomes

Institutions following this process should aim to create:

1. A cross-sector accessibility partnership.
2. A heritage accessibility action plan.
3. An annual lived-experience review.
4. A portfolio of demonstration projects.
5. A shared higher education community of practice.
6. A long-term strategy embedding Universal Design into all estate planning.

Ultimately, the project's central lesson was that higher education campuses should be viewed not simply as historic estates but as places for people. Accessibility, participation, dignity and belonging must become guiding principles for how institutions engage with both their heritage and their cities.



APPENDIX 1

Deliverable 1: Learning Note from Mutual Learning Exchange (MLE) No. 1 – Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

1. Agenda

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland 2 July 2025		
10.30am	**Networking, welcome and introductions**	**Liz Hughes, RCSI**
11.00am	**From Access to Altitude, the evolution of Universal Design for Living and Learning** Questions and Answers/Discussion	**Deirdre McHugh, University of Galway** **Dara Ryder, AHEAD**
12.00pm	**Update on the Public Sector Duty** Questions and Answers/Discussion	**Bernie Bradley, Katie Murphy** **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission**
12.30pm	**Lunch and optional tour** A whirlwind tour of some of RCSI's campus ○ Women on Walls in 123 St Stephen's Green ○ 26 York Street including the new sensory room, state-of-the-art gym, library and the award-winning simulation space.	**Julia Morrow – EDI Unit** **Estates team - RCSI**
2.00pm	**Heritage Projects** **Feasibility Study** To inform an upgrade and reconfiguration of our physical spaces to optimize functionality, accessibility, visitor experience and design in line with stakeholder and collection needs. **Museum Standards Program for Ireland** This accreditation promotes professional standards in the care of collections and to recognise through accreditation the achievement of those standards with the heritage sector. RCSI is at the beginning of this process.	**Susan Leyden** **Archivist, RCSI**
2.30pm	**From 26 York Street to Project Connect – innovation and accessibility in action in RCSI's built environment** **Ireland's first public health gallery – an overview**	**Ronan Baxter, Collette Power - RCSI Estates** **Jane Butler, RCSI**
3.15pm	**Close**	

2. Background information on the Project

This mutual learning exchange driven project explores how intersectionality is, or can be, incorporated into estate planning for city centre or city adjacent higher education institutions (HEIs) with heritage listed buildings. The project goal is to identify best and promising practices and build towards a sectoral community of practice. All "HEIs as Places for People" partners (Trinity College Dublin, Royal College Surgeons Ireland, Technological University Dublin, and University of Galway) have buildings listed on the National Built Heritage Service site; we are mindful of our heritage status and conservation obligations while ensuring we plan forward in considering the needs of current and future students and staff. While recent years have seen an increased obligation to interrogate accessibility across all equality grounds and incorporate a Universal Design approach in the built environment HEIs still face practical hurdles in implementing these methods on heritage campuses. To resolve the tension between these obligations, this project seeks to build a cross-sectoral HEI network to support work on issues of reimagining historic spaces to meet the current and future needs of an inclusive learning community. In facilitating these opportunities for intentional cross-disciplinary exchanges, we aim to strengthen relationships between Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Access, and Estates offices and reframe ongoing conversations through an intersectional lens.

3. Overview of MLE 1

The first project Mutual Learning Event (MLE) was ***The Scope of the Challenge***, aimed to outline the legislative and sectoral obligations present when addressing historical architectural contexts in HEIs. RCSI hosted this project kick-off event. Dara Ryder with AHEAD and Deirdre McHugh with University of Galway, introduced the ALTITUDE Universal Design Charter and outlined how its principles can be a guide for HEIs looking to embed an inclusive approach in their capital infrastructure. Their focus on experience of physical spaces grounded our discussions.

Key points during this session include:

- Compliance with Irish legislation demands a Universal Design approach in education, as the Disability Act (2005) requires that the design of any physical space must be independently accessible in the widest possible range of situations, while the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) specifically names education as a service which must be accessible to all people without individual modification.
- The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) defines Universal Design for Education as a "whole system design" that includes full and independent accessibility to physical and digital environments as well as the educational services themselves.
- Universal Design is processual by nature: it requires an institutional culture that allows for reflection to be embedded throughout the design process instead of siloing consultation of service users to a single stage of a project. To accomplish this, CEUD recommends a human ecological systems approach that scaffolds Universal Design principles at the macro or policy development level, the meso or institutional and departmental strategic level, and the micro level of resolving specific design issues.
- When addressing a historical design legacy through a Universal Design approach, creativity and dedication to creating a permanent, universally accessible solution are key.
- Current national strategies focused on equity of access are prioritising the integration of Universal Design at an institutional level—AHEAD's ALTITUDE Charter is providing

institutional partners with active support on redesigning their institutional and departmental organisation to reorient their strategies through the lens of Universal Design principles.

It was suggested that collaboration between Estates and Facilities and other departments is the most effective strategy for instilling UD principles into the design process and recommended integrating UD into the design process for capital projects and institutional strategic goals. Dara Ryder agreed and mentioned AHEAD's successful partnership with the National Transport Authority on Universal Design in transportation as an example of high-level collaboration on capital infrastructure in the design phase.

RCSI noted that their graduated pedestrianisation of York Street in collaboration with Dublin City Council was a great example of systemic Universal Design that required patience on the planning side, with a comment from AHEAD that patience and integration of UD in the initial phases reduces later retrofitting costs. It was noted that incorporating UD into a project design from the outset reflects approximately 1-3% of total costs.

Presenting an understanding of legal obligations through the Public Sector Duty, speakers from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Duty obligations and placing people at the centre of considering critical infrastructure planning through an intersectional lens.

Key points during this session include:

- The public is not a monolith—current statistics demonstrate that literacy, an 'able' body, or a monocultural background are unsound assumptions to make about the average user of a public service (such as a HEI). These assumptions in the design process are what create the circumstances of indirect discrimination and in turn strip away a service user's human rights.
- As part of an HEI's Public Sector Duty, it must identify and eliminate inequalities in any physical and digital environment or service and regularly publish evidence-based assessments identifying risks of discrimination or human rights violation in the service.
- A Universal Design framework integrates the fulfilment of these duties into the design process, as it requires constant reflection on the needs and abilities of service users to create an environment or service that can be fully accessed by anyone and encourages community involvement in assessing service accessibility.

Through the subsequent presentations and tours of RCSI's heritage and new-build learning spaces, our speakers from RCSI demonstrated how an intersectional approach widens access to higher education spaces for a wide variety of communities, including the broader public. As the Estates and Facilities team shared their best practices in redesigning heritage spaces, the Archives and Gallery teams discussed how creating inclusive physical spaces allows for stronger engagement with the public around the RCSI's history and research.

Key points during these sessions include:

- The integration of Universal Design into service design at RCSI has allowed its archival services to fulfil the standards of the Museum Standards Program for Ireland's Feasibility Survey, as it prioritises the independent accessibility of all exhibits at the outset of their design.
- This focus on Universal Design also improves staff and student engagement with institutional heritage collections, as the design process for engagement programmes begins by assessing their needs and interests and guarantees user independence within the collections facility.

- Instating a system-wide design approach allows RCSI's Estates team to effectively address individual historical design oversights within the greater context of managing a complex city centre real estate portfolio, as diverse service user needs are already accounted for from the outset of the redesign process.
- "What once was compliant is no longer acceptable": Reflection is an integral aspect of an Estates management process guided by Universal Design principles, and so even design features that were once or may still be compliant with Part M regulations cannot be acceptable if they do not allow for universal independent access.
- Stakeholder engagement on capital development projects sparks creativity for integrating otherwise neglected accessibility features—student feedback and participation in the design process is a clear example of success in this area with the new Sensory Rooms, but wider engagement can allow the institution to embed itself as a community service.
- An intentional design process that prioritises independent access prevents future expensive retrofitting projects, which effectively ends the cycle of stopgap measures to patch historically exclusive design features.
- The new public health gallery is an opportunity to invite the public into RCSI, considering their needs and abilities in the design process of the exhibits is key to guaranteeing effective engagement.

Attending the MLE were 46 participants from 12 organisations, including all 4 project partner institutions. Additionally, colleagues from National College of Ireland, the National Disability Authority, the Higher Education Authority, AHEAD, IHREC, Dublin City Council, Grangegorman Development Agency, and Outhouse, were in attendance. The attendees represented a range of sectors, including Estates and Facilities management, disability, access officers, heritage officers, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Human Resources, etc.

4. Concluding comments

Following from post-hoc engagement with attendees, participants reported their appreciation for the cross-disciplinary opportunity to connect with fellow practitioners and see practical applications of Universal Design in heritage spaces. The sectoral crossovers this event facilitated, even just between individuals, has created a strong foundation for this emerging community of practice. The diversity in presentation topics was viewed positively, but future sessions may need to include more intentional context on the implications of a Universal Design approach to the built environment as an explicit throughline connecting sessions.

Participants named site visits as another beneficial element of the exchange, as it was clear evidence for the efficacy of UD design philosophies in resolving historically exclusive design elements. Multiple participants mentioned that they would cite elements of the site visits in future strategic meetings at their own institutions and consider exceptional features of their institution that they would want to share with the group.

A key recommendation was that more time be allocated to participant questions and discussion, with the suggestion that the agenda be less full to facilitate the growth of cross-institutional/cross-disciplinary engagement. Flexibility around breaks and sensory spaces was an important accessibility point raised for future exchanges and the symposium, especially since these breaks support our aim of facilitating interdisciplinary networking.

On future presentation topics, participants requested sessions on a greater range of intersecting equality grounds beyond disability, especially around intercultural considerations in heritage learning spaces. A dedicated session on regulatory obligations surrounding heritage buildings was also suggested, as many participants felt this was essential

information to inform the decision making process, —a possible selection of experts has been suggested for a future panel. These logistical recommendations will be incorporated into the structure of future events for this project, especially as they address relevant accessibility needs.



APPENDIX 2

Deliverable 2: Learning Note from Mutual Learning Exchange (MLE) No. 1 – Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

1. What was the site visit route?

Women on Walls portraits in 123 St. Stephen's Green; RCSI Library and The RCSI SIM Centre for Simulation Education and Research in 26 York Street.



RCSI Building at 123 St. Stephen's Green

2. Why was this chosen?

Our aim was to highlight both historical and modern elements of RCSI's built environment, and explore how EDI is being incorporated, and to include a healthcare focus. The two different buildings provided an insight into RCSI's history and our future.

3. How does is demonstrate intersectional considerations for university use?

Elements of intersectionality were present throughout the tour.

The Women on Walls portraits highlight the importance of role modelling and representation, and hang in the historic RCSI Board Room.



Women on Walls in RCSI's historic Board Room

In the SIM Centre we showed ongoing work to diversify skin tones of models and manikins, and explored how simulation education benefits healthcare practitioners and patients alike.



RCSI's SIM Centre

The Library visit included considerations of neurodiversity and accessibility (there are different noise/activity zones throughout the Library designed in collaboration with students) and showcased the EDI and Allyship Collection.



RCSI's Library and "Quiet Space" signage

4. What were the challenges with the site/heritage buildings?

In 2019, Women on Walls (in partnership with Accenture) celebrated the pioneering achievements of eight women leaders in healthcare. This was a response to the lack of visual representation of women in our heritage building, and the idea that 'you cannot be what you cannot see'. Since this project launched, other artworks (including paintings, photographs and sculptures) have been commissioned to celebrate influential women in healthcare and education, both past and present.

Other challenges identified included accessibility of historic buildings, and how our Estates team has responded. The 26 York Street locations explored during the visit showed the benefits of considering accessibility from the design stage, and having a purpose-built facility.

5. Any comments/insights/etc. from the site visit?

The site visit gave us the opportunity to explore how universities grow and adapt to serve the needs of increasingly diverse student and staff populations, and how we manage this across historic and contemporary buildings.

With thanks to Julia Morrow, Collette Power, Kathryn Smith, Dermot Daly for organising this site visit.

APPENDIX 3

Deliverable 3: Report on Mutual Learning Event (MLE) 2: The Art of the Possible

1. Agenda

6 November 2025 at Technological University (TU) Dublin, Grangegorman		
10.00	Registration	
10.30	Welcome & Introductions	Dr Deirdre Lillis, President of TU Dublin
10.40	Introduction to the project & overview of Campus	Prof. Yvonne Galligan, Emerita Fellow Collette Burns, Head of Campus Planning
10.50	The Wayfinding Centre	Jamie Millar, Policy Officer, Vision Ireland
11. 30	**Panel Discussion** Chaired by Aine Higgins Ní Chinnéide, National Disability Authority (NDA) a. Using interactive technology to promote outdoor physical activity for older adults (10mins) b. Application for hearing support at Blanchardstown, Aras Geal & Tallaght North (10 mins) c. More than Quiet Corners: libraries as living spaces for inclusive learning. (10 mins)	Fatima Badmos Tim O'Sullivan, Capital Infrastructure Manager Gillian Kerins, Assistant Head of Library Services, Planning and Administration
12.15	Lunch	
13.15	Tour to Lower House via East Quad (time and weather permitting)	Collette Burns, Pamela Butler & Paul Horan
14.00	Academic Hub – Spatial Approach to Universal Design Q&A	Jeana Gearty, Director O'Donnell & Tuomey Architects
15.00	Close Out & next Mutual Learning Event in University of Galway	Prof. Yvonne Galligan

2. Background information on the Project

This mutual learning project explores how intersectionality is, or can be, incorporated into estate planning for city centre or city adjacent higher education institutions (HEIs) with heritage listed buildings. The project goal is to identify best and promising practices and build towards a sectoral community of practice. All "HEIs as Places for People" partners (Trinity College Dublin, Royal College Surgeons Ireland, Technological University Dublin, and University of Galway) have buildings listed on the National Built Heritage Service site; we are mindful of our heritage status and conservation obligations while ensuring we plan forward in considering the needs of current and future students and staff. While

recent years have seen an increased obligation to interrogate accessibility across all equality grounds and incorporate a Universal Design approach in the built environment HEIs still face practical hurdles in implementing these methods on heritage campuses. To resolve the tension between these obligations, this project seeks to build a cross-sectoral HEI network to support work on issues of reimagining historic spaces to meet the current and future needs of an inclusive learning community. In facilitating these opportunities for intentional cross-disciplinary exchanges, we aim to strengthen relationships between Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Access, and Estates offices and reframe ongoing conversations through an intersectional lens. MLE 2 builds on the first project MLE hosted in RCSI, July 2025 and incorporates feedback and suggestions from the project partners and participants. The MLE 2 location, St Laurence's Church was especially fitting given its heritage status, current multi-function use as part of a busy university campus and its accessibility. Built 1854 as an ancillary building to the Richmond Asylum it now functions as a multi-purpose venue for prayer, worship, meditation, music and university events as well as conferences.

3. Overview of MLE 2

The second Mutual Learning Event (MLE) focused on ***'The Art of the Possible',*** and aimed to explore what is possible in heritage campus buildings when adopting a Universal Design approach to their renovation and upgrades and aiming for a "a campus for all". Given the number of heritage buildings on the TU Dublin Grangegorman site (11 in total) and that much of the renovations, re-purposing and adaptation of buildings for use in their present higher education context is relatively recent and must therefore incorporate Part M guidance, this location for MLE2 was relevant and welcome.

Dr Deirdre Lillis, President of TU Dublin opened the Event and warmly welcomed all the attendees. Dr Lillis noted the great value of coming together to share experiences, not just across universities in the project but also involving the local community, who are important users of the TU Dublin campus. She also noted the number of students (27,000) and the diversity of students who chose to study in TU Dublin. Prof. Yvonne Galligan thanked the President and welcomed attendees and introduced Collette Burns, an architect and Head of Campus Planning in TU Dublin. Collette shared images from Dublin maps of the Grangegorman site and emphasised how it has changed over time into its current incarnation as a university. The challenges with the site, with its slope to the River Liffey, the range of buildings on the site and the needs of an expanding student population and staff coming to work onsite from other campuses were outlined. She spoke briefly about the St. Lawrence's Church, as the event venue, and how if functions as a multi-use space for the university hosting conferences, seminars, social functions as well as religious events. She also introduced the Lower House building which was be the main focus of the building tour for the MLE (and see below for further detail).





The Lower House, Grangegorman Campus, TU Dublin

Kevin Kelly, Head of Policy from Vision Ireland introduced the Wayfinder Centre, a first-of-its-kind transport training centre in Dublin City which aims to assist and support people with disabilities to overcome challenges around using public transport and transport hubs such as train stations and airports. Home - The WayFinding Centre

Key points during this session included:

- The Wayfinding Centre is in operation since 2024 and is the 1st transport training facility like this in the world. The goal and mission of the Centre is to make public transport accessible to all. The Wayfinding Centre is a part of Vision Ireland Services which is a registered charity.
- 22% of the population of Ireland has disabilities, but only 6% use public transport. The Wayfinding Centre believes it should be accessible for everyone. As people take it to such important areas of life, work, education etc. However, people with disabilities experience a lot of barriers when seeking to access transport and the built environment.
- TU Dublin researched different modes of navigating the Grangegorman campus to make sure the campus design and layout was easily accessible for students/staff/anyone with disabilities.
- A regular journey can take up to five times longer for those with disabilities as architecture doesn't, as a matter of course, include those with disabilities in their designs. The Wayfinding Centre hopes to change this.
- There are a lot of visual barriers for people on transport. (e.g., Dublin bus timetable at the bus stops) and the Centre seeks to promote inclusion by design by offering training for transport staff, built environment professionals, designers, etc.
- It is important to make sure that staff in the transport sector have disability training. At present, Irish Rail and Dublin Bus staff engage in such training at The Wayfinding Centre.
- 300 people have received travel training in the Centre with support from their team of accessibility experts and access ambassadors. There is no charge for this training.

SESSION II
Panel Discussion

Chaired by Aine Higgins Ní Chinnéide,
National Disability Authority.

Using interactive technology to promote outdoor physical activity for older adults

Fatima Badmos, PhD student, Electrical & Electronic Engineering (and the ADAPT Centre):

- Research explores technology to help older people be active outside, using the Grangegorman campus as the outdoor study site space.
- Issues such as seating, toilet proximity, distances between spaces are important for this cohort.
- Project uses technology such as QR codes, smartphone apps to log activity and music generating items to encourage outdoor activity. However, many of the participants in the project do not own a smartphone.

Application for hearing support at Blanchardstown, Aras Geal & Tallaght North

Tim O'Sullivan, Capital Infrastructure Manager, TU Dublin.

- A lot of hearing aids are changing. There are fewer technological interruptions with their devices and many can be controlled via a person's smartphone. These systems are easier to operate and less visible to others.
- Set up entails work from IT/Audio technicians.
- The source of audio is via a PC, which is connected to a modifier. This, in turn, is connected to media software. These all sit in mobile connect streams, which means that students can connect to the audio stream themselves to listen using the Sennheiser mobile app. They link into channels which align to room numbers so they can connect and listen. Students will then get messages based on what quality of audio they'll need and this is based on their needs. Feedback from students suggests that they are happy that this does not require additional equipment and can be set up via your mobile. They also have provided feedback on how to improve the app.
- Access to the app helps to reduce social exclusion, as students can hear their friends and classmates asking questions and are more likely to ask questions themselves.
- There have been a lot of advances made with software so that students can feel more included, but lecturer involvement and training are still needed to ensure optimal usage and set up and functionality.
- The EU Accessibility Act as it relates to education is also relevant to installing and using this technology.

More than Quiet Corners: libraries as living spaces for inclusive learning

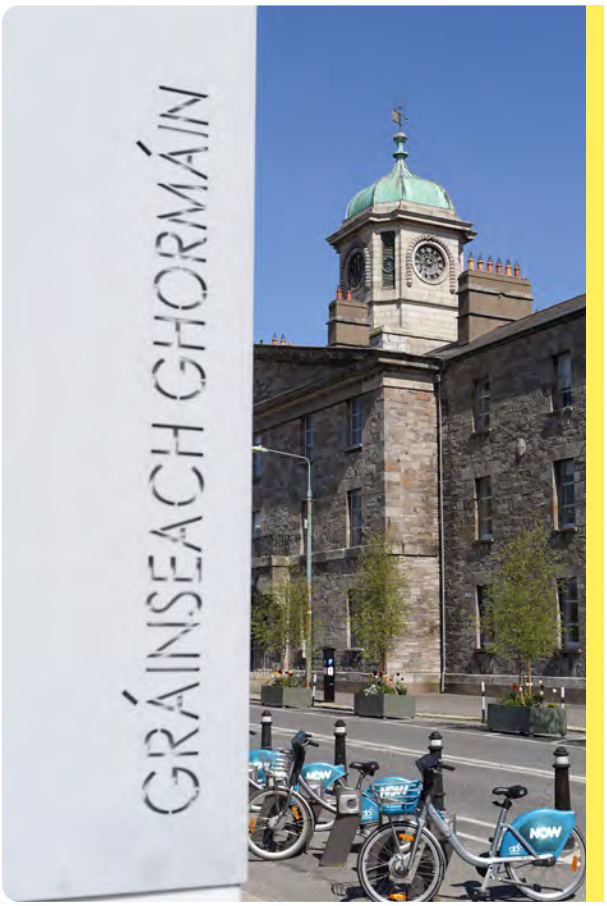
Gillian Kerins, Assistant Head of Library Services, Planning and Administration, TU Dublin.

- New library design, considerations for accessibility and features were outlined including the dedicated exhibition space and the seed library which has a garden.

- Libraries in universities must operate in a context of strict budget restraints, which means that they have to focus on short term costs which is hard to align with building design, layout and other needs. The climate control for library users and for book integrity and humidity prevention is also a key consideration.
- Using features in libraries to support inclusive environments that are mindful of sensorial overload included, for example, use of items such as bookstacks to create a natural buffer between spaces, giving attention to better seating, providing private study boxes, and installing suitable lamps to reduce glare.
- Virtual reality tours of the library, maze map, delegated person for accessibility are all in place now.
- A signage audit was undertaken and the results incorporated into the new signage.

Tour of Lower House and East Quad

The walking tour sites were chosen to demonstrate the challenges and opportunities that exist when refurbishing and re-using historic structures and sites. It also showed how the new buildings and connections across the campus have all been considered to sit in harmony with the existing historic buildings. The masterplan incorporated all 11 protected structures on the site. The palette of materials and finishes used by new developments on the Campus has been adapted from that on these historic structures. This ensures there is greater harmony been old and new and the composition together feels like a place that has been considered holistically. The 5 meter change in level across the site is accommodated in a gentle slope that ensure easy access to all the spaces and places. Seating has been incorporated into the many planters to allow people to stop and rest or meet and chat. Bollard lighting has been installed on all the new walkways to ensure the routes are clearly lit and visible.



Public Road by Clock Tower, Grangegorman, TU Dublin

The tour made its way from the event venue of St. Lawrence's Church, through the East Quad then down to the Lower House and back. The route crossed Grangegorman Lower, a public road, which has been closed off to through traffic (except bicycles and pedestrians) to make a safe and easy connection from one side of the campus to another.

The East Quad building was completed in 2021, is 16,600m2 and houses the Conservatoire and Art & Design schools. It has a large atrium space that becomes an internal street connecting Broadstone on the northern side, through the building, to the landscaped open route down to the Lower House. The 'street' is used by student, staff with a café space adjoining as well as access to the teaching spaces.



Gently Sloped Path through Grangegorman Campus, TU Dublin

When you leave the East Quad, through the southern entrance, the sloped path leads you, via the landscaped meadow, to the entrance of the Lower House. This is the oldest remaining building in Grangegorman and was part of the original Richmond Asylum, built between 1810 and 1815. The Lower House has been completely refurbished from a derelict state to host numerous functions for the university. It is now the main Student Hub for TU Dublin with a range of modern facilities and amenities. These include a dining areas with seating for 250, student common rooms, offices and meeting spaces, 2 sports studios, changing rooms and 18 music practice rooms. The new, modular dance studio was added onto the building.

The building has specific challenges in terms of universal access since the 2 side pavilion were built at a different level from the central area. The architects had to incorporate new ramps and stair to ensure suitable circulation to allow all staff and students to move freely through the building. They also used striking colourways, taken from images of the palette that had been used historically in the building, to signify floors and routes. These vivid colours add light and vibrancy to the historic structure as well as making the spaces more playful and friendly. The University has also developed a full signage manual for use in all new buildings across all Campus's. This provides universally applied symbols, text and braille to improve and simplify visual and touch communication. The manual is continually updated to allow for requests and feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders. The existing granite stairs were refurbished to ensure they were suitable for safe use and 2 new lifts were installed to reach all 3 floors of the building.



Colour-coded stairwells at Lower House, Grangegorman Campus, TU Dublin



Signage is clear, consistent and tactile at Grangegorman Campus, TUD Dublin

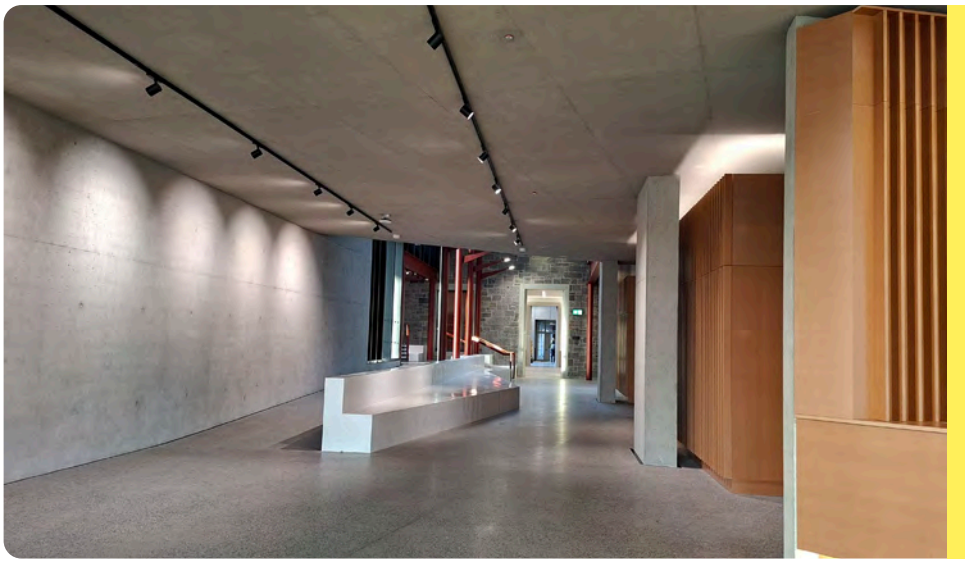
SESSION III

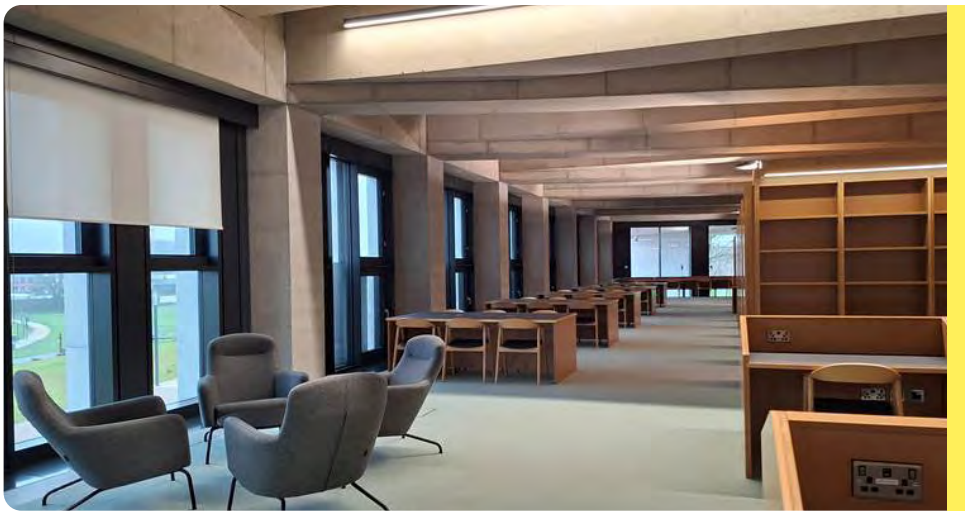
Academic Hub – Spatial Approach to Universal Design.

Jeana Gearty, Director O'Donnell & Tuomey Architects

Jena Gearty outlined the approach underpinning the design of the new Grangegorman campus Academic Hub, which will open soon and is a 12,000 square meter space for a new library an admin support staff and bridges 200 year old structures with contemporary architecture spaces. Key area and spaces and consideration addressed in the design and build were outlined.

- Building is sustainable and flexible.
- Goal is to let the building have its own life, and as a result, "pocket spaces" sit in the middle of the campus.
- There is intentional connection from building to building, with accessible parking very close to the entrance.
- Lifted skirt of Academic Hub offers a view of the North House. North House East had separated them.
- Ground floor is completely open, with a café and exhibition space, a learning place with furniture. The library is on the 1st floor where access is via a staff or student card. An important design consideration was ensuring that the ground floor is open and inviting.
- It was not possible to make the original stairs accessible as they are quite shallow and don't meet with contemporary regulations. Thus, new stairs were made. This entailed the need to take out part of the floor, and (colour-coded) red stairs are those that are inclusive. There is also lift access in the building. Feature stairs connect all 3 levels of the library which help support a sense of community in the building.
- An underpinning idea is that there are various types of spaces for learning: some are smaller and quieter, and there is also a larger space that can facilitate more people. There is a 50-meter-long library desk, and also small, individualised spaces which are placed next to the stairs to maintain connection to others.





Varied Seating & study area Design in the Library

4. Q&A

How to address acoustics in the spaces- use of coffers in ceiling, acoustic absorption woodwall, cushioning underneath the carpet, north house- ceiling is made of an acoustic plaster on the top floor. The ceiling is pulled back away from the edges to augment acoustic absorption.

Lighting- lighting is lowkey. The goal is to know that you're walking through a place that's well-lit and not a space with fancy lights. All the steps in the stairs are lit. There are no lights on the ceiling of the library reading room, only desk lights and uplighters and down-lighting on the columns, as well as lights on the bookcases.

5. Closing remarks

Professor Yvonne Galligan

TU Dublin

Professor Galligan thanked all the speakers and presenters and noted that their work adds to our learning when it comes to figuring out how to adapt our buildings in the 21st century while paying homage to the history of the buildings and places.

Dr Helen Maher and Dr Deirdre McHugh from University of Galway thanked TU Dublin for hosting the MLE2 and invited participants to attend MLE3 in Galway in February 2026. They noted that these events allow for pushing the boundaries in terms of design thinking and access and for the emergence of co-creative and co collaborative approaches while working with colleagues and sharing same barriers and opportunities we all encounter on our campuses.



APPENDIX 4

Deliverable 4: Learning Note from MLE No. 2 at TU Dublin



Professor Yvonne Gilligan with Dr Deirdre Lillis, President, TU Dublin

1. What was the site visit route?

The route taken was as follows: Assemble at St Lawrence Church, walk across the east side of the campus from the church, across Grangegorman Lower to the East Quad. Walk through the East Quad building via the eastern atrium, exit onto the pedestrian walkway and walk down the slope to the Lower House, north entrance for the building tour. The Lower House (LH) tour started in the entrance foyer than made it way through the ground floor canteen, up to the first floor sports and office spaces then to the music rooms before coming back down to the ground floor via the dance room and student common room. The group then walked back to St Lawrence Church.

2. Why was this chosen?

The route was chosen to show the MLE attendees some of the external realm that has been developed at Grangegorman, the interconnectivity between the public / external spaces and the private / university spaces as well as the different types of developments from new buildings to conversions of historic structures.



Site visit in progress at TU Dublin, Grangegorman campus

3. How does is demonstrate intersectional considerations for university use?

This demonstrates intersectional considerations since it demonstrates the need to take on board the needs of external stakeholders on the University campus as well as internal; to involve multiple design teams to work across a variety of building projects so that they can all harmonious slot into a wider masterplan on the site; to work with various statutory and University policies including our access needs, design requirement, consider staff and student experience, signage policies, design standards and mandatory technical guidance document.

4. What were the challenges with the site/heritage buildings?

There were many challenges since the building was essentially a ruin before the project commenced. The entire building needed to be rebuilt including walls, floors, roofs etc. although some of the staircases and other features remained. The 2 side 'wings' of the building were constructed at a different level from the central section so internal ramps and stairs would be needed to link the spaces horizontally. There are 242 windows in the building. Each was slightly different from the other. This resulted in a need for bespoke joinery across the building adding substantial cost. The existing structure and configuration also meant that there were spatial constraints with regards to room sizes, circulation spaces and openings between spaces. This meant that the designers needed to make the building as connected as possible while still working within the constraints of the existing structure.

5. Any comments/insights/etc. from the site visit?

The internal finishes were chosen to work with the student focused use of the spaces, to provide vibrancy and life as well as clear definition of the various areas. The horizontal connection across the building is clear and visually straightforward to help all users navigate through. The required ramps do remove some of the useable space but are necessary to bridge the change in levels. The provision of 2 lifts allows for resilience and options in vertical circulation. The building uses are varied but the historic spaces have proven to be adaptable, even if limited in terms of ultimate capacity. The historic structure, although challenging, gives incredible character & quality to the rooms and overall

environment. The adaptation of the building, with its historic, negative institutional connections, into a vibrant student and staff environment is an excellent example of re-working a narrative, re-use and circularity.

6. Anything else you wish to add or explain?

The building signage was adapted from the signage used in the 2 new large projects (Central Quad and East Quad) for the Grangegorman campus. In this way the design / pictograms and visual information was to be constant across the whole campus helping with legibility and overall branding.

Thank you to the TUDublin Campus Planning team which organised and led the visits for all visitors.



APPENDIX 5

Deliverable 5: Mutual Learning Event (MLE) 3: The Future is Universal Design

1. Agenda

25 February 2026 at University of Galway		
10.15 – 10.45	Registration and refreshments	
10.45 – 11.00	Welcome and introductions	**Dr Helen Maher** Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion University of Galway
11.00 – 11.50	Student-led Accessibility workshop: Are we all on the same EmPath?	**Miriam Collins** **Niamh Griffin** **Molly Hickey** **Izzy Tiernan** University of Galway
11.50 – 12.00	Comfort Break	
12.00 – 12.30	Engaging the student voice in transforming our campus: Physical and sensory accessibility at the University of Galway	**Dr Deirdre Mc Hugh** Universal Design Manager University of Galway
12.30 – 13.15	Lunch and photo exhibition (before and after campus accessibility improvements)	
13.15 – 14.00	South Campus Tour – Physical and sensory accessibility improvements to a Heritage Campus	**Buildings and Estates Team** University of Galway
14.00 – 14.45	The Future is Universal Design: NDA Universal Design Grand Challenge Student Awards	**Dan Eames** Senior Design Advisor Centre for Excellence in Universal Design National Disability Authority
14.45 – 15.00	Closing Reflection	**Dr Helen Maher** Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion University of Galway

2. Background information on the Project

This mutual learning project explores how intersectionality is, or can be, incorporated into estate planning for city centre or city adjacent higher education institutions (HEIs) with heritage listed buildings. The project goal is to identify best and promising practices and build towards a sectoral community of practice. All "HEIs as Places for People" partners (Trinity College Dublin, Royal College Surgeons Ireland, Technological University Dublin, and University of Galway) have buildings listed on the National Built Heritage Service site; we are mindful of our heritage status and conservation obligations while ensuring we plan forward in considering the needs of current and future students and staff. While recent years have seen an increased obligation to interrogate accessibility across all equality grounds and incorporate a Universal Design approach in the built environment HEIs still face practical hurdles in implementing these methods on heritage campuses. To resolve the tension between these obligations, this project seeks to build a cross-sectoral HEI network to support work on issues of reimagining historic spaces to meet the current and future needs of an inclusive learning community. In facilitating these opportunities for intentional cross-disciplinary exchanges, we aim to strengthen relationships between Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Access, and Estates offices and reframe ongoing conversations through an intersectional lens. MLE 3 builds on the first and second project MLEs hosted in RCSI (July 2025) and TUD (November 2025) and incorporates feedback and suggestions from the project partners and participants arising from these events. The MLE 3 location was chosen for its accessibility features and proximity to heritage buildings and recent campus works.



L-R: Back row: Liz Hughes (RCSI), Dan Eames, National Disability Authority and Rebecca Grogan; Front row: Lorraine Leeson (TCD), Collette Burns (TU Dublin), Helen Maher (UofG), Deirdre McHugh (UofG), Siobán O'Brien Green (TCD) and Yvonne Galligan (TU Dublin)

3. Overview of MLE 3

The third Mutual Learning Event (MLE) focused on the theme, "The Future is Universal Design", which aimed to centre stage the student experience, embed their participation and discuss some projects and associated consultation that had been undertaken in relation to inclusive and accessible campus design at the University of Galway. As such the event agenda was designed to spotlight and hear from students as well as the National Disability Award Grand Challenge Student competition leads.

4. Welcome and introductions

Dr Helen Maher

Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Galway

Dr Helen Maher, Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Galway opened the event and warmly welcomed all attendees (42 people were present). She shared that she was delighted to be hosting this event particularly in the context of the University of Galway's efforts made towards Universal Design and the student involvement in co-design and co-development regarding advancing accessibility and inclusion. Dr Maher noted that the challenge within the EDI space focuses not only on individual aspects of equality but also on intersectional experiences and, as such, we need to move from individual experience to reframing and refocusing on the wider institutional structures and practices that are embedded in the fabric of the institutions. Dr. Maher urged participants to move beyond thinking of equality as siloed to individuals and individual roles towards a view of equality as concerning every person in the institution and as a responsibility for a public sector organisation. "Students are the future of Universal Design", she said.

Dr Maher referenced the Council of Europe campaign "All Different – All Equal" and shared that by doing the same thing for everybody at all times and at all places is a surefire way to ensure that we are all treated unequally. Therefore, different individual needs must be met in different ways as a starting point, noting that there are challenges and difficulties when moving from theory to policy and finally to practice. She noted the importance of engaging with the lived experience of accessibility and barriers, putting students at the heart of a project, and the particular complexity of navigating heritage sites and working within constraints that apply when seeking to forge pathways towards accessibility and inclusion. In closing, Dr Maher praised the collaborative aspect of the project and noted that instead of a focus on competition in the higher education environment, EDI Offices and staff are working towards shared goals. Even where there are divergent opinions about what equality means in practice, advances in one HEI is an advance for all institutions.



SESSION 1:
Student-led accessibility workshop: Are we all on the same EmPath?

Miriam Collins, Niamh Griffin, Molly Hickey and Izzy Tiernan, University of Galway

The EmPath project was introduced with a focus on exploring barriers that are commonly overlooked because we don't tend to look beyond our own experiences. This innovative and interactive project sought to draw attention to the fact that there are no universal experiences, and that if we develop empathy we can move forward together by considering other experiences. The interactive part of the workshop saw MLE participants divided into 3 groups where in each group one sensory perception was altered at each of three stations. At each station, a project lead guided MLE participants through the experience.

Hearing/noise: There are lots of different ways this can be impacted including, e.g. audio hypersensitivity and being overwhelmed as a result or because audio is not clear and hearing is not possible.

Seeing/Visual: Visual overload can occur and some people have issue filtering out distractions like posters or lighting. This needs to be considered in lecture teaching settings especially where PowerPoint slides are used. Lighting also needs to be considered.

Fine Motor Skill/Movement: Hand mobility is not universal. Some movements don't come easily, and certain movements are not always possible. As a result, things that seem easy for some can be extremely taxing for others.

As the three groups of participants moved around the stations set up to experience each sensory change, there were lots of discussions in the room. The workshop aimed to focus lived experiences to promote empathy: the more empathy that is fostered, the more sensitive we will all be to what needs to be changed to facilitate inclusion for as many people as possible. At the core of this session was the premise that barriers can be hard to spot, but empathy makes it easier.

Across the day, photos documenting work to improve campus accessibility were on display. The photos brought to light the extent of works undertaken to improve campus accessibility underpinned by Universal Design and consultation.



Faolán Doecke-Launders (Trinity College Dublin) and Miriam Collins (University of Galway) at the MLE No. 2 at the University of Galway

SESSION 2:

Engaging the student voice in transforming our campus: Physical and sensory accessibility at the University of Galway

Dr Deirdre McHugh, Universal Design Manager, University of Galway

Dr McHugh presented the evidence-based approach that informed recent accessibility improvements on the University of Galway campus. She described the collaboration between the Insight SFI Research Centre for data Analytics' 'Crowd for Access' footpath mapping project and the University which used open-sourced technology and tools including Mapillary (an app that takes photos every 3 seconds and records routes) to enable an inter-generational group of University staff and students to map 80% of campus footpaths for accessibility. The data is uploaded to Open Street Map and accessibility features and barriers such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving and obstacles such as rubbish bins are tagged to provide accessibility information. Anyone can access the data.



Wheelchair accessible study pod at University of Galway

The UG Physical Accessibility Forum was set up as a consultative group with an equal number of students and staff in the forum, this balance is important, so students don't feel intimidated. The Forum engaged in mapping exercises and asked students directly what were the barriers for them. Approximately 1.2 million Euros was provided for UG campus works and improvements with all 'new build' projects including Universal Design as a goal. However, historical preservation can be a challenge. A sensory map of the campus was a key output of the Forum – through this process areas that could be transformed into sensory areas were identified. The map is designed to allow people to find areas that support their sensory needs, and what areas to avoid for certain sensitivities. The Forum worked in a very collaborative way, with a balance between lived experience and expert experience. A new version of the Forum is now being set up with a focus on sensory disabilities.

- Questions to Dr McHugh included whether there were any unintended negative environmental impacts as a result of the accessibility campus works. None were identified, though it was agreed that it is important to keep sustainability in mind.
- Another question arising related to what guidance is provided to the UG Estates team. It was noted that resources from the National Disability Authority are referred to, and that the lived experience of UG community members is drawn down. Additionally, all capital projects have a document called “the fundamentals” which seeks to ensure that disability and Universal Design are considered, if possible.
- At UG, the Universal Design Manager is a new role - it has existed for a year to date. The role includes all areas of Universal Design on the campus, not just relating to physical accessibility, but also Universal Design of the digital environment, services and learning, teaching and assessment.



Accessibility by design- clearly marked footpaths at University of Galway

SESSION 3:
The Future is Universal Design: NDA Universal Design Grand Challenge Student Awards

Dan Eames, Senior Design Advisor, Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD), National Disability Authority (NDA)

Dan talked through the Four main pillars of the CEUD:

- Built environment
- Digital
- Products and services
- Education.

He also noted the Macro, Meso and Micro levels of systems and processes for Universal Design (UD). He also pointed participants to the NDA Code of Practice on Accessible Heritage Sites (2011).

For the NDA Universal Design Grand Challenge Student Awards, students submit a project as part of their studies which is reviewed by a panel of UD experts from around the world. The award categories are built around the four pillars of CEUD and include: a people's choice award; built environment; digital; and products and services. There is also a commercialisation award funded by Enterprise Ireland. The awards have been running for 11 years with over 700 projects submitted and 99 finalists. To date, 50 awards have been presented and this entails €40k award prize funding. Over 21 HEIs have had students submit applications to the prize. Dan outlined some of the successful previous award winners including:

- Universal Design pregnancy test: blind pregnant persons can be the first to know instead of relying on someone else to read them the results.
- Architecture of care: investigating the full experience of sense and what is the role of architecture of care.
- Education circle room: accessible education for secondary students with community integration
- Plans for restoration of a heritage building which was previously a flour mill.

The projects can be viewed here: universaldesign.awardsplatform.com/gallery

Dan shared that the 8th Biennial International Conference on Universal Design Universal Design conference will be hosted by University of Galway in November 2026. Questions posed to Dan included do award winning students go onto have jobs in the area of UD, the NDA keeps in contact with award winners and several have created their own businesses. He also outlined how the 2005 Disability Act was vital for Ireland to been seen as a place of excellence for UD.

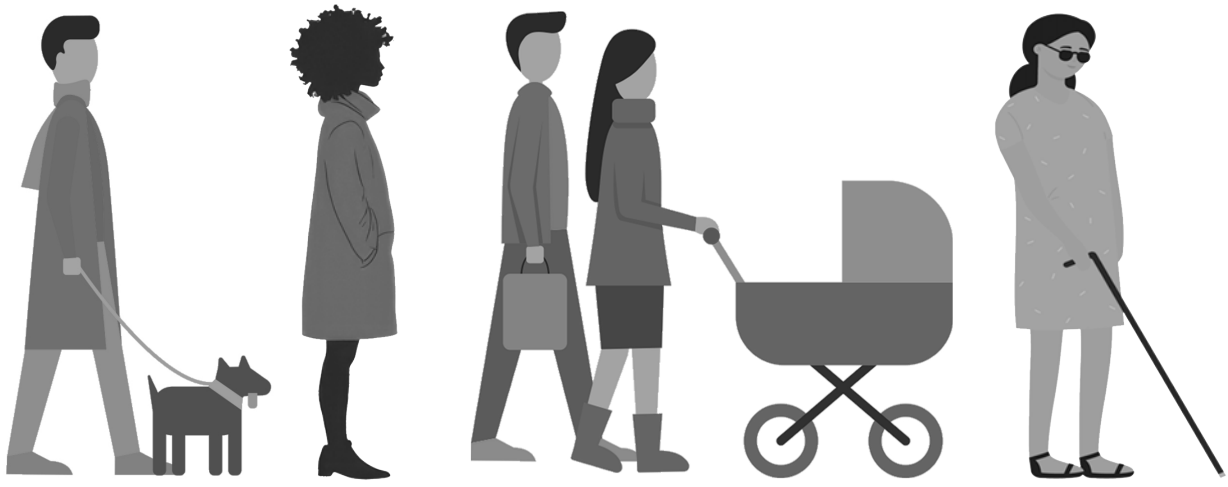
CLOSING REFLECTIONS:
Dr Helen Maher

Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Galway



Dr Helen Maher, Vice President for EDI, University of Galway

Helen thanked everyone for their work in organising the MLE and reminded participants that working in collaboration with students is new to some of us so to be mindful of power dynamics with students. She highlighted that we need to look through different lenses to see both the bigger and smaller picture as part of UD work in HEIs.



APPENDIX 6

Deliverable 6: Learning Note from MLE No. 3 at University of Galway



The University of Galway MLE 3 Organising Team

1. What was the site visit route?

The site visit encompassed an accessible route through the University's historic South Campus:

- beginning at Áras na Mac Leinn (listed, former Irish Munitions Institute, 1850s) moving past the O'Donoghue Centre (1850s, renovated 2017) to O'Shaughnessy Bridge (2012);
- along a quiet canal bank route to the President's Lawn, taking in an accessible outdoor study pod and fitness equipment along a pathway recently re-directed to within the treeline, separating it from road traffic to the historic Gate Lodge (early 1800s);
- behind the historic Quadrangle Building (listed, 1845, Victorian Gothic Revival), past walled gardens and an outdoor classroom that provide a sensory-friendly retreat for campus users;
- alongside the heritage building Áras de Brún (listed, 1970s, Modernist) through an area with outdoor seating, mature trees and a fruit garden;
- past a newly installed outdoor seating area with a coffee kiosk and another outdoor study pod;
- through the lower level of the listed James Hardiman Library Building (listed, 1970s,Modernist), past the Reading Room, the Spéir Student Pantry, Sibín Student Social Space, An Bialann (the main canteen), the Students' Union Shop and the University Bookshop;

- exiting the lower level of the Hardiman Building, past a newly replaced external lift servicing three level;
- moving towards the University Chapel and Chaplaincy which provides a quite retreat and pastoral support for students of all faiths or none, encompassing two secluded gardens, past planted area with outdoor seating and opposite the secluded garden of the Philosophy Department which includes outdoor seating, a book borrow box and a herb garden;
- returning to Áras na Mac Leinn along a route to the right of the Hardiman Building past the long external ramp providing wheelchair access to Alumni Plaza, turning left at Áras Ní Eimhigh, along newly resurfaced footpaths past Blocks D and E (listed, circa 1890, late Victorian).

2. Why was this chosen?

Architecturally, the site visit explored transitions between and within University of Galway's historic buildings, tracing the architectural heritage of the campus, from the 1800s to the present day via accessible routes, the design of which was informed by the lived experience of disabled students and innovative research, as illustrated by a before and after photographic exhibition. Like other consortium campuses, University of Galway has a mix of heritage and modern buildings, however, it is also a parkland, river-adjacent campus encompassing protected habitats, which provides a rich sensory experience. The route took in recent accessibility improvements to building surrounds, including improvements to footpaths and crossings, ramped entrances to buildings and, within buildings, the addition of power-assisted doors and improved access to lifts. It explored the sensory-friendly outdoor retreats and quiet routes across campus, highlighted on the University's Sensory and Wellbeing website and map, that are particularly important to the wellbeing University's neurodivergent community.

3. How does is demonstrate intersectional considerations for university use?

Intersectional considerations were demonstrated by exploring alternative quiet, sensory- friendly routes and facilities, designed to be accessible to all by engaging the lived experience of students with multiple disabilities.



A wheelchair accessible outdoor study pod that doubles as a sensory pod

4. What were the challenges with the site/heritage buildings?

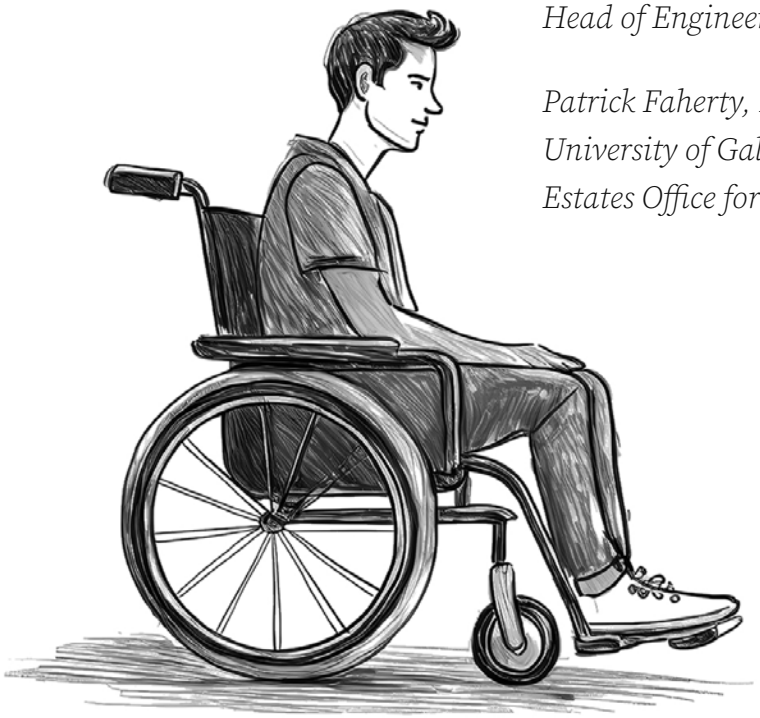
The most significant challenge encountered was in ensuring accessibility while preserving the integrity of both heritage buildings and protected habitats. The complexity and high cost of retrofitting heritage buildings with accessibility features was a key challenge. The moist nature of the campus landscape, encompassing the riverbank, protected fen land and marshes, and proximity to the sea, coupled with Galway's damp climate, posed additional challenges relating to drainage and surfacing materials.

5. Any comments/insights/etc. from the site visit?

Vice-President for EDI, Dr Helen Maher, noted the unifying effect of exploring intersectional considerations in developing accessible and inclusive campuses in collaboration with national partners. Throughout the site visit colleagues from different institutions shared knowledge and practice, celebrated each other's successes and supported each other in addressing challenges with no hint of competition. These conversations were informed by meaningful and productive partnerships with disabled students. A key take-away was that improving accessibility and inclusion on one of our partner campuses, benefits us all.

6. Anything else you wish to add or explain?

Earlier MLEs explored the beauty and grandeur of heritage buildings and their surrounds and the inherent challenges and notable successes in making them accessible and user-friendly. This MLE explored the hidden spaces of heritage campuses and the intersections between spaces, highlighting how small changes, informed by lived experience, can make a significant impact.



We would like to warmly thank Kevin O' Sullivan, Head of Engineering and Infrastructure, and

Patrick Faherty, Buildings Engineer, from University of Galway's Buildings and Estates Office for leading the site visit.

APPENDIX 7

Deliverable 7: List of resources to support future work

- AHEAD https://www.ahead.ie/
- Altitude Universal Design Principles for Tertiary Education https://www.ahead.ie/altitude
- Association of University Directors of Estates "Neurodiversity – A design and management guide for higher education environments" https://www.aude.ac.uk/Resources/News/View?g=dc988136-6c59-458f-a150-65bf61ae2650&audit=true
- Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) https://universaldesign.ie/
- Coimbra Group Heritage Working Group https://www.coimbra-group.eu/working-group/heritage/
- Deaf Space Principles https://infoguides.rit.edu/deafspace/principles
- Deaf Space Campus Design and Planning https://gallaudet.edu/campus-design-facilities/campus-design-and-planning/deafspace/
- Higher Education Authority (HEA) https://hea.ie/
- HEA Access Policy https://hea.ie/policy/access-policy/access-publications/
- HEA Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) https://hea.ie/policy/gender/centre-information/
- Irish Architecture Foundation https://reimagine.iaf.ie/
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) https://www.ihrec.ie/
- National Disability Authority https://nda.ie/
- New European Bauhaus https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en
- Office of the Planning Regulator https://www.opr.ie/
- Places for People - National Policy on Architecture https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/publications/places-for-people-the-national-policy-on-architecture/
- Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty IHREC https://www.ihrec.ie/public-sector-duty
- The Heritage Council resources https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/advice-and-guidance/resources
- The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland https://www.riai.ie/
- The Wayfinding Centre https://thewayfindingcentre.ie/



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

www.tcd.ie/equality

Creative Design & Artwork:

IGI LIMITED