



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin



Cláir Rochtana Choláiste na Tríonóide **Trinity Access Programmes**

Annual Report **2024/25**

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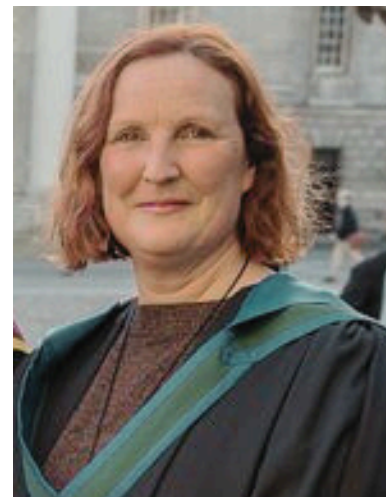


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A Message from our Director

Dear TAP Supporters,

It is my great pleasure to share with you the 2024/25 TAP Annual Report, a celebration of the achievements, resilience, and ambitions of our students and communities. At the Trinity Access Programmes, students remain at the heart of everything we do. This year's report reflects the breadth of that commitment—from primary school children discovering the excitement of learning, to mature students finding new pathways into higher education, to graduates who carry their TAP experiences into their professional and personal lives.



The past year has been one of growth and renewal. In line with the National Access Plan 2022-2028, we have strengthened our outreach in schools and communities. In addition, we have broadened pathways for young adults and mature learners, and expanded supports for Traveller and Roma students. Our research continues to demonstrate the powerful impact of sustained engagement, and our financial supports have eased the journeys of hundreds of students, making education more accessible and sustainable.

As we look ahead, this will be a pivotal year. We are finalising the TAP Road Map, a plan that will guide our direction and ensure our programmes remain ambitious, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of learners. This will directly support Trinity's new Strategic Plan 2025-30 'Thrive', ensuring that access, diversity, and equity continue to be at the core of the university's mission.

I want to thank our students, staff, partners, and supporters for making this work possible. Together, we are building bridges to education and opportunity that transform lives and strengthen our communities. I hope you enjoy this report, which tells the story of another inspiring year at TAP.

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Wendy Crampton".

Wendy Crampton
Director

What We Do

A broad overview of our work

Admissions & Post Entry

works with Foundation Course, FET, and mature students, while also providing post-entry support to TAP undergraduates throughout their academic journey.

Research, Policy and Data

identifies what works and shares valuable research insights, helping drive data-informed decisions that broaden access to higher education.

Schools Outreach

delivers tailored programmes —like campus tours, subject tasters, skills workshops, and academic supports— designed to inspire and support primary and second-level students.

Engagement

plays a key role in TAP's mission by building strong relationships and sharing consistent, inspiring messages. This team also creates philanthropic support for students and programmes.

National Programmes & Student Finance

manages financial resources for TAP students and also leads meaningful national initiatives like College Awareness Week.



The TAP Student Journey

School and
Community
Outreach



Alternative
Entry Routes



Post Entry
Support



Successful
Graduates



2024/25 at a Glance

See some of our highlights from the past year

Second-level students who engage in TAP Pathways Activities are

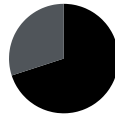
5

times more likely to progress to higher education



63%

of DEIS second-level schools nationwide took part in College Awareness Week



22,400

Student engagements in school outreach activities



370

Bridge to College students



4000

Primary students involved in TAP activities



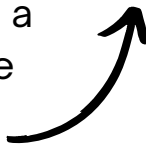
8838

School students visited campus



416

Students entered Trinity through a TAP alternative entry route



395

Students in receipt of scholarships



1.7

Million in student financial support



45

Students enrolled on the Foundation Course



2269

Prospective Young Adult and mature students engaged



78

TAP graduates undertaking postgraduate study in TCD



Activities with Primary Schools



Working in socio-economically challenged areas, our team reach students at an early stage and show them what's possible.

Mini Med Day

140 students experienced life as medical students through activity challenges such as CPR and Radiology as part of Mini Med Day.

LAW Taskmasters

85 4th-6th class students from three of our linked primary schools learnt about the world of law through the School Tasking programme, a collaboration between TAP, the Law Society of Ireland and the University of Warwick.

Maths and Science Fest

Over 1,000 5th and 6th class students from 18 of our linked primary schools across Dublin had the chance to take part in Maths and Science workshops on campus.



Bookmarks

One of our longest running TAP programmes, it's a highlight of the academic year. The initiative aims to inspire children from our linked schools to become the next generation of storytellers, artists, and creatives, while encouraging them to see their future in higher education. This year, 44 6th class primary students saw their books displayed in the Long Room, in the Old Library of Trinity.

This early exposure to programmes and activities paves the way for pathways to higher level education.

“We had a lot of fun drawing and watercoloring and pouring our imagination onto the page”

Bookmarks Participant



Activities with Second-level Schools

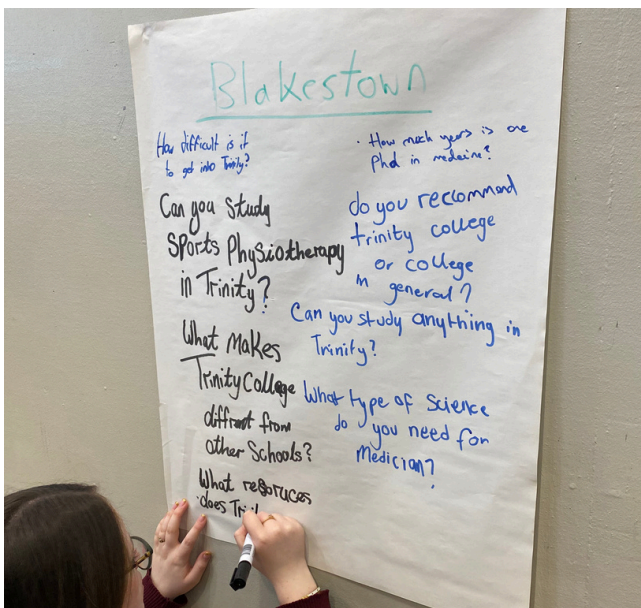
As students develop, our programmes expand to support them, showing that higher education is within reach.

Med Day

142 2nd year students from 20 schools took part in Med day a collaboration with Trinity Medical School, Trinity Anatomy, TCD Med Day and St James's Hospital Foundation.

Scholars Ireland

220 2nd year students from 19 linked second-level schools graduated from the Scholars Ireland programme. The programme works with 13-14 year olds who get to study a college style topic with a PhD student over a four month period.



Campus Tours

Nearly 3000 2nd years were brought on campus for tours this year, many of which included taster modules in subjects such as biology, nanoscience, and law.

Pathways to Law

80 Senior Cycle students took part in PTL activities. A new partnership with the London Irish Lawyers Association (LILA) included online workshops such as Criminal Law, TV & Film Law, and Family Law.

Summer School

90 5th year students from TAP and Community-linked Schools joined us for our TAP Summer School. Alongside sessions on college life, creative writing, and sport, each student had the opportunity to do a deep dive into one subject area, with options including law, business, nursing and midwifery.



Bridge to College

Over 370 TY Students engaged in Bridge to College this year both in Oriel House and in Citywise Education in Tallaght. This was the biggest year yet for the programme and 350 took part in a leadership project. Their projects were showcased and awarded at a ceremony in May.

Academic Supports

Students from our linked schools also had the opportunity to take part in Junior Cert and Leaving Cert maths and Irish grinds to help them in their academic journeys. The sessions took place in Trinity giving them an idea of what university life could offer!

CodePlus

CodePlus inspires young women from our linked schools to delve into computer science through interactive coding projects, engaging problem-solving activities, and meaningful connections with women working in technology. In February, Workday hosted 150 Transition Year female coders to celebrate their achievements.

Through these experiences, young people build skills, confidence, and ambition - preparing them for pathways into college and careers.

“I enjoyed gaining skills like presenting, talking to other people just getting my communication and confidence up”

Bridge to College
Participant



Young Adults

For many, the next stage begins with our Foundation Course and Further Education pathways, while some enter Trinity directly through the HEAR scheme.

The Foundation Course for Young Adults

In February, the Foundation Course class of 2023/24 celebrated their graduation. Lily Rose Kavanagh was presented with the Grant Thornton Leadership award, a testament to the compassion and leadership she showed towards her peers while maintaining her dedication to academic excellence. This year the Foundation Course Symposium was held in Salesforce. From ocean studies to poetry, our students showcased their passion and dedication across a wide range of projects.

“The supports that you get from everyone, even people that you don’t know supporting you. It’s just an unreal experience”

Lily Rose Kavanagh,
Foundation Course
Graduate



City of Dublin ETB Partnership Courses

The Foundation Course Partnership courses also celebrated their graduation on campus. Students who took part in the year-long courses in Pearse, Plunket and Liberties college were delighted to celebrate their achievements with friends and family.

Further Education and Training Routes

86 Students were accepted into Trinity via the FET route in 2024. There were also 35 visits to FET colleges and fairs and 4 on campus events engaging over 2269 prospective students. The “Tiny Taste of Trinity” event was also attended by over 150 FET students. The programme of mini lectures, study skills, career guidance and workshops took place over three days. A Nursing in Trinity Seminar also took place in January for students in FET Level 5/6 courses who were interested in progressing to full nursing degrees.



Pathways to Business

Pathways to Business at undergraduate level is our programme for students in business-related courses to prepare them for the workplace. This year, students received a range of specialised supports to develop the key competencies essential for future success. One highlight was the Speedmeet where we welcomed industry guests from businesses across Ireland.



Pathways to Law

Pathways to Law provides our undergraduate students with a framework for the legal profession and puts in place practical measures to ensure greater equity and diversity in law. Our students had the opportunity to engage with professionals actively working in the legal sector. This mentoring proved invaluable, offering students a wealth of opportunities. The School of Law also appointed a new Diversity and Inclusion officer, former TAP ambassador and staff member Jen Maguire Donoghue.



Ambassador Activities

Foundation Course and undergraduate students got involved in a wide range of activities, from one-to-one mentoring to inspiring school visits. Their generosity of time and experience made a real difference, showing younger learners that their goals are within reach. Every year, our dedicated Ambassadors visit partner schools during College Awareness Week, sharing their own journeys, offering valuable advice, and introducing students to opportunities like the HEAR scheme.

These stepping stones show that access is about belonging, thriving, and moving toward opportunity.

Mature Students

Learning has no age limit, and TAP empowers mature students to reignite their education, proving it's never too late.



Mature Students in Trinity

In 2024, 199 mature students accepted third level places in Trinity. Mature students also attended “Tiny Taste of Trinity” where they could find out about using their QQI qualifications to progress to third level courses in Trinity. Visits were also made to a wide range of FET Colleges, Adult Education organisations and libraries around Leinster to help us reach more aspiring mature students during the year.

FET Routes

Mature student Ambassadors returned to their FET colleges during College Awareness Week to share their journeys to third level. The Community Learning Fair also gave aspiring mature students the opportunity to learn about FET routes to Trinity as well as supports for Mature Students from Uiversity Scholarships and Dublin Adult Education Services.

Mature Student Foundation Course

In 2024, 16 mature students began the Foundation Course and in February, 21 students from the 23/24 cohort celebrated their achievements at the Foundation Course graduation. Fifteen of these have progressed to degree programmes at Trinity. Former mature students also took part in the Dublin Learning City Festival, sharing their personal journeys and inspiring others to follow in their footsteps. At one event, mature student Rachel Clinton summed up the transformative power of education, saying, “*I come alive when I’m learning.*”

Mature student success reminds us that access to education transforms not just individuals, but families and communities.



"It definitely has given me a level of confidence I haven't had for years"

Vera Lawlor,
Mature Student



Listen to
Vera's
Educational
Journey
here!



Traveller and Roma Students

True inclusion celebrates diversity, with students overcoming barriers and affirming cultural identity as a strength.



“I know how crucial a role we play in shaping the lives of young people. Through our work we can inspire, motivate, and encourage children and students to be passionate about learning”

Annmarie Collins
(below)

Reaching Traveller Students Nationwide

As part of College Awareness Week, every DEIS school in Ireland received the Traveller Teaching Resource, created by Annmarie Collins, a Foundation Course graduate now pursuing her PhD at Trinity. The week was launched with a webinar led by Annmarie, where she demonstrated how to use the resource effectively to support Traveller students.

Poetry and Spoken Word Event

In March, a special event at Trinity brought together Traveller poets, writers, and artists to share their work. Through powerful words and performances, they explored themes of culture, identity, and the human experience. Staff and students from both Trinity and UCD also contributed, adding their own voices to the celebration.

International Roma Day

In April, UCD came alive with the celebration of International Roma Day, organised by the Traveller and Roma Access Officer for Trinity and UCD. The day was a vibrant tribute to Roma heritage, blending history, storytelling, traditional music, and poetry. It was a joyful gathering that honoured the richness of Roma culture while fostering connection and understanding.

These initiatives open paths to higher education for all, regardless of background or tradition.



A Graduate's Story

The impact TAP has is best understood through graduates' stories, which show the difference continuous support can make.

HEAR Scheme-Daniel Hall's Journey

Daniel Hall recently completed his PhD in Mechanical Engineering at Trinity—almost a decade after finishing his Leaving Cert. Reflecting on the beginning of his journey, Daniel shared: *"Originally, I didn't have Trinity on my CAO application because engineering was 555 points, and I thought it would be a waste of an application since I knew I wouldn't get that. On the CAO Change of Mind day, my family convinced me to add it. When the results came out, I got roughly 450 points, but thanks to the HEAR (TAP) programme, I was offered a place."*

Continuous Support

Daniel recalled the valuable supports he received as a TAP student: *"Trinity had a 'pre-freshers' week specifically for TAP students. We were shown around the campus and introduced to the services TAP provides. The TAP office offered exam study guidelines, technical help, and a support fund. They set me up to succeed, and from there I accepted every challenge that came my way."*

Pursuing a PhD

Support from a professor helped Daniel take the leap into postgraduate research:

"It took some convincing, but in the end, I transferred out of my 5th year into my PhD project. From there, I gained so many skills. I've spent more time showing my interest and willingness to learn in an area than showing grades or test scores. I was lucky with my path, but I had help every step of the way."

Each graduate's success is a personal triumph and a testament to the power of sustained investment in access programmes.



Bringing It All Together



Across all these strands, TAP creates a community of learners, mentors, and supporters who connect and inspire each other throughout the year.

College Awareness Week

College Awareness Week (CAW) engages learners of all ages across Ireland. In November, 966 DEIS primary schools received teaching resources and merchandise to mark the occasion, alongside 232 DEIS second-level schools who also took part. Further Education Colleges and organisations nationwide joined the celebrations, helping to promote pathways into Higher Education.

Community Mentoring

This year marked the final year of the Community Mentoring programme, supported by the PATH 3 initiative, which over six years has reached more than 11,000 learners in Dublin and beyond. The initiative connected undergraduate students with adult learners and second-level school students from underrepresented communities.

In 2024/25, 80 undergraduate mentors were recruited from participating universities, engaging with 1,119 learners during the academic year. Mentors also worked with refugees and asylum seekers on campus through Trinity's University of Sanctuary initiative.

Dublin Learning City

Dublin Learning City, part of the PATH 3 initiative, celebrates lifelong learning across Dublin's communities. This year, TAP Mature Student Rachel shared her story, while TAP alumnae—mother and daughter Karen and Leah—spoke on a panel at an Adult Education event.

Our team hosted a community group walking tour and held our first biodiversity tour on campus, welcoming adult learners from across the city. In addition, over 50 individuals from Youthreach and Adult Education centres visited for campus tours. TCD Students' Union Access Officer Sarah also shared her TAP journey on Q102, inspiring listeners across the city.

Listen to some of Sarah's interview here!



Celebrating Elaine

Elaine's journey with TAP is one of resilience, growth, and dedication. She first joined the team working in housekeeping before moving into the main office, where she became an indispensable part of our work. Having left school at just 13, Elaine later returned to education to improve her literacy skills. Reflecting on her experience, she once said: *"What an opportunity I was given. No other place would have let me learn at my own pace. They never made me feel like I did the wrong thing."*

Over the years, Elaine supported hundreds of students and played a key role in ensuring the smooth delivery of TAP programmes. In recognition of her exceptional contribution, she was awarded an honorary master's degree from Trinity. Her retirement celebration in September 2024 brought together current and former TAP staff, Foundation Course tutors, and alumni whose lives she had touched—an inspiring tribute to a remarkable member of our community.



Trinity on the Move

We were proud to have TAP Foundation Course graduate and Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) player, Linda Djougang, champion our fundraising efforts for Trinity on the Move, with all proceeds supporting undergraduate students in financial need. On March 19th, Front Square came alive for a vibrant TAP-led event.

Students from our linked primary and second-level schools, along with undergraduates, Foundation Course students, and TAP staff, gathered in solidarity—carrying colourful signs and banners as we walked the campus together. The energy and community spirit were infectious, and thanks to everyone's generosity, we raised an incredible €3,275 in a single day to support students on their educational journey.



These shared moments of celebration and solidarity remind us that access is a collective effort, fueled by collaboration and community spirit.



Financial Support

TAP's financial support removes barriers and gives students the stability they need to focus and succeed.

TAP Scholarships

395 students were in receipt of scholarships this year. 65 new philanthropic scholarships were also created.

“Being a young person from an underprivileged background it was never really a “big thing” to go to college or if you did go to college, you often couldn’t finish the course due to financial strains. However, TAP has been able to relieve that financial strain for me allowing me to pursue a career in Nursing”



“Being financially supported has enabled me to pass through college comfortably and realise this amazing feat. I am showing my kids the power and joy of further education”

1916 Bursary

The 1916 Bursary was awarded to 87 Trinity undergraduate students this year. The 1916 Bursary supports students most socio-economically challenged and underrepresented at third level. These can include lone parents, students with disabilities and members of the Traveller community.

Student Assistance Funds

507 students received the Student Assistance Fund (ESF/SAF) managed by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. 150 students received the emergency fund, helping them with everyday costs like food, transport and class materials.

“The financial support has completely changed my experience of college in terms of stress levels and how many hours I have to work, it often is the thing that ties me over the end when bills pile up at the beginning or end of the month.”

**Laidlaw Trailblazers
Scholarship Recipient**

Practical support through TAP's financial programmes helps students overcome challenges and stay focused on learning.

Research

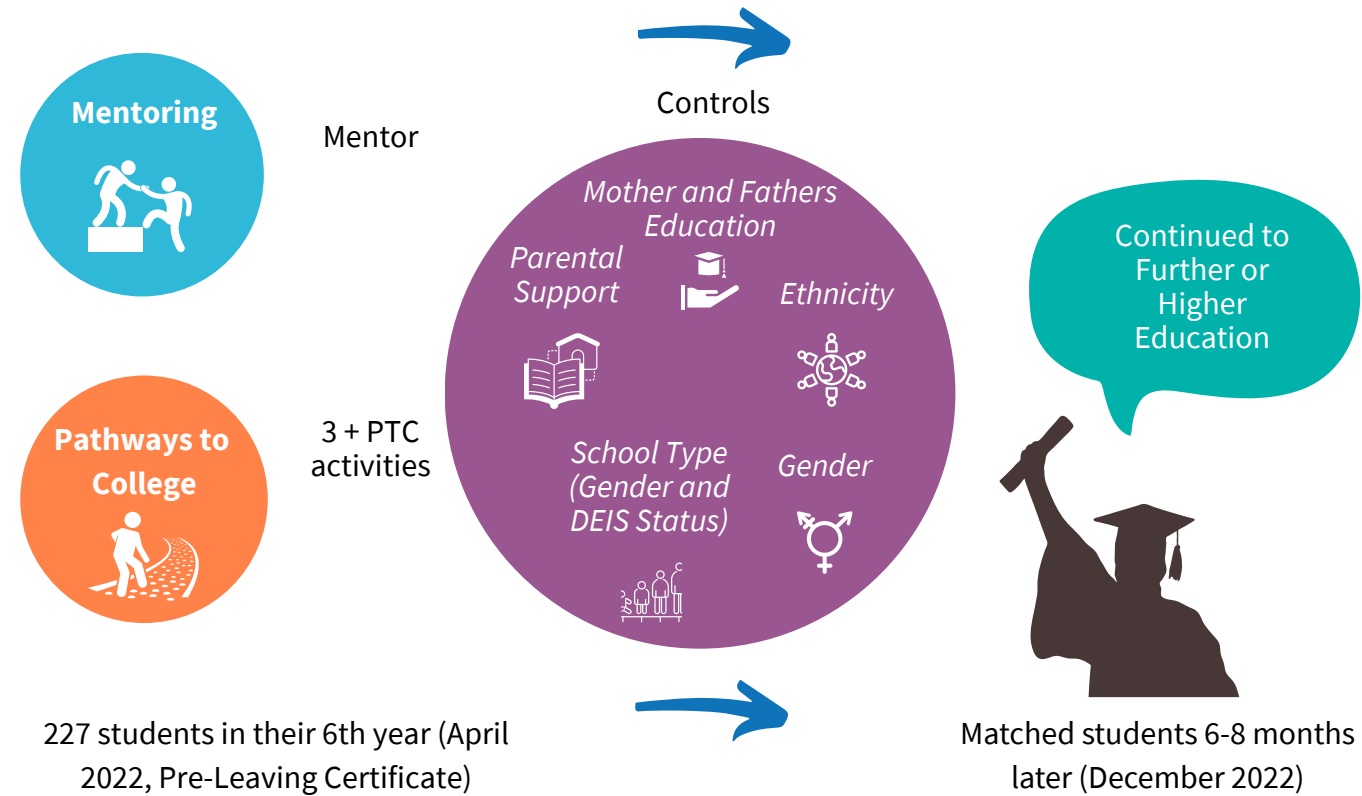
Our work is continuously informed by evidence. Through research, TAP measures impact, refines practice, and shares insights to inform policy.

Longitudinal Research

In 2025, TAP’s ongoing longitudinal research partnership with second-level schools reached a major milestone, with findings published in three leading academic journals (Ní Chorcóra et al., 2023, 2025a, 2025b). These articles, were published by PhD candidate Eilís Ní Chorcóra in collaboration with Dr Aibhín Bray and Dr Joanne Banks of Trinity College Dublin. This research tracks thousands of students across 20 second-level schools over a number of years.

Findings from the study show that TAP’s mentoring and pathways programmes significantly support students in raising their educational aspirations and progressing to further or higher education. Students who participated in three or more pathways activities were associated with nearly 5 times more odds of progressing to post-secondary education, demonstrating the powerful impact of sustained engagement in TAP outreach.

Read the research on the reference page at the end of this report or by scanning this QR code:



Access Maths

The Access Maths programme entered its third year with 36 participants, including teachers from pilot schools, Oide, and the Department of Education. In March, a showcase event featured keynote speaker Shannon Ahern on promoting engagement in the maths classroom.

This year, the programme began piloting AI tools to help teachers design more engaging maths lessons. The Digital Badge was also launched, allowing teachers nationwide to gain recognition for their work in closing the socio-economic gap in maths education.

Eleanor Byrne shared initial findings from her research on AI-supported teaching at the European Conference on Education Research (ECER), highlighting its potential to enhance classroom practice.



College Awareness Week and Schools of Distinction

Reviews carried out by our research team both of College Awareness Week (CAW) and Schools of Distinction (SoD) show that both programmes have a meaningful impact on students from underrepresented socio-economic backgrounds. Stakeholders reported that the initiatives raise aspirations, enhance college readiness, and promote post-secondary pathways through hands-on activities, mentoring, and exposure to college environments.

Both programmes are valued for their flexibility, visibility, and ability to engage whole schools. The reviews highlight opportunities to refine messaging, integrate with existing school frameworks, and expand high-impact activities to further support student engagement and educational equity.



Evidence shows access programmes are not just aspirational, they are effective, scalable, and essential to educational equity.

Looking Ahead

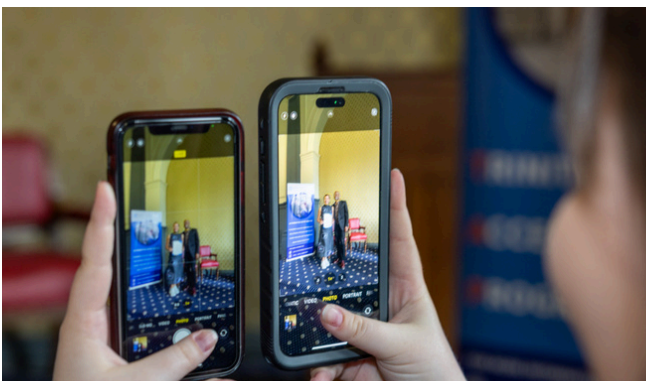
The journey continues, with new initiatives and partnerships, expanding reach so future generations can benefit from even more opportunities.

Extramural to TAP Programme

In partnership with the School of Histories and Humanities, TAP is launching Extramural to TAP—a unique, assessment-free pathway that prepares students for university. This short and welcoming programme offers an engaging introduction to history, culture, and the arts while building skills and confidence for entry to the Trinity Access Programmes Foundation Course.

Working with North East Inner City Schools

TAP has expanded its network of 40 linked DEIS primary and second-level schools by engaging more North East Inner City schools in outreach activities. In August 2025, a new North East Inner City Outreach Coordinator joined the team to strengthen relationships, foster community engagement, and create meaningful educational opportunities in the area.



Connective Detective

Through a collaboration with the *Smart Docklands* programme, TAP linked primary schools took part in the Connective Detective exhibition. In this hands-on workshop series, 5th and 6th class pupils designed ideas for smarter cities of the future, which they proudly presented in Regent House. Their creativity even made headlines on RTÉ News2day!

Computer Science Hedge School

TAP and Trinity's School of Computer Science and Statistics are joining forces to deliver Ireland's first Computer Science Hedge School. The Hedge School, supported by Google.org, gives students from DEIS schools the opportunity to undertake the Leaving Certificate Computer Science course. Google.org will also support a new pre-university Computer Science module, and research into best practices for integrating Generative AI in education. These initiatives will help address the gap in computer science education.

Guided by the TAP Road Map and Trinity's new Strategic plan, our mission remains constant: to open doors, transform lives, and build an inclusive future for all.

Our Team

Director

Wendy Crampton

Academic Champion

Professor Brendan Tangney

TAP Main Office

Annemarie Lambe,
Finance Officer

Laura Miranda,
Administrative Officer

National Programmes and Student Finance

Kathleen O'Toole-Brennan,
Associate Director,
National Programmes and Student Finance

Ciara McGarry-Quinn,
Traveller and Roma Access Officer,
(UCD and TCD)

Admissions and Post-Entry

Sarah Grimson,
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Clodagh Byrne,
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Catherine O'Brien,
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Bríd Hannan,
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Ellen O'Connell,
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Dr Jennifer Murphy,
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Elaine Carey,
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Bernadette Scott,
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Kayleigh Conway,
North East Inner City Outreach
Coordinator

Blessing Kaseem,
Schools Team Intern

Esly Canga,
CodePlus Coordinator

Engagement

Dr Lisa Keane,
Associate Director,
Engagement

Natalie Brandon (on maternity leave),
Communications and Development
Coordinator

Molly Dillon-Leetch,
Communications and Administration
Coordinator

Research, Policy and Data

Dr Rónán Smith,
Associate Director,
Research, Policy and Data

Dr Sara Lynch,
Research and Policy Coordinator

Kate Maloney,
Data Systems Coordinator

Eleanor Byrne,
Access Maths Coordinator



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- Ní Chorcóra, E., Bray, A., & Banks, J. (2023). A systematic review of widening participation: Exploring the effectiveness of outreach programmes for students in second-level schools. *Review of Education*, 11(2), e3406. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3406>
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TAP Annual Report 2024/25

Trinity Access Programmes Thank You



Trinity College Dublin

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