TRINITY ACCESS

Schools of Distinction Award Guidelines 2021/22

Information on the School of Distinction Award

This 'Schools of Distinction Award' aims to recognise and showcase the efforts of schools nationwide to transform their school culture and to develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning[1]. The scheme will recognise the often extraordinary work being successfully undertaken by schools in challenging conditions and with limited resources. It encourages participants to draw on their own school and community resources and the resources of the Trinity Access project in Trinity College Dublin to support educational innovation and change.

[1] There will be a strong focus on schools within the Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools scheme (DEIS) and Schools Completion Programme.

Aims

This award scheme aims to support the development of 'college-going' practices and a student-centred, innovative learning environment across schools nationwide, particularly within schools where there is a low progression rate to post-secondary education.

Three Award Levels

Community Award:
Our Community Award recognises the achievement of schools who have joined our Community of Practice and engaged in a process of evaluating and identifying the needs of their students and teachers through our School Planning Document. Community Award winners set relevant targets to address these needs and action student centred programmes with the aim of embedding a college-going culture in their school. Schools that win this award have begun the process of engaging in the 3 core practices of Pathways to College, Mentoring and Leadership in Learning and have plans to expand these programmes in the future.

Innovation Award:
Our Innovation Award recognises the creative and innovative ways that schools are embedding a college-going culture. They have active, student-centred programmes that support the 3 core practices of Pathways to College, Mentoring and Leadership in Learning in their school. Innovation Award winners support and encourage their teachers to explore innovative teaching methodologies, engage with other excellent teachers through our Community of Practice and establish Community of Practices within their own schools

Transformation Award:
Our Transformation Award recognises schools that have embedded a vibrant college-going culture, transforming school vision, perceptions and expectations. Transformation Award winners have established the 3 core practices of Pathways to College, Mentoring and Leadership in Learning as fundamental to their whole school culture. Innovative and student-centred teaching and learning is a priority with teachers leading and supporting a Community of Practice within their own school and the wider Trinity Access community. Transformation Award winners actively engage in a process of reflection, using school data and current research to inform their whole school planning and target setting.

Suite of Prizes

Prizes for 2022 awardees	Community	Innovation	Transformation
Campus Tour for 2nd year students	online	in person [1]	in person
TAP Ambassador Talk for 6th year students	online	in person [2]	in person [2]
Large indoor/outdoor banner with school name	1	1	1
Digital banner with school name	1	1	1
Cash award to support core practice development in the school	300 [1]	800 [1]	1300 [1]
Fully funded scholarship for Post Graduate Certificate in 21st Century Teaching and Learning	1 [4]	1 [4]	1 [4]
In school CPD workshops	1	1	1
Teachmeet/Conference invitations	4 [1]	4 [1]	4 [1]
Access to Trinity Access Research and Reporting Tools	Yes [3]	Yes [3]	Yes [3]
Access to Trinity Access developed Progression	Yes	Yes	Yes

Tracking Tool			
Community Mentor Training	Yes	Yes	Yes
School Consultation(s) with TA team	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eligibility for pilot programmes & initiatives as appropriate	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Subject to availability and may change due to circumstances beyond our control
2. Dublin schools only, other schools will be offered an online alternative
3. A minimum of 60% of the student body must be involved in TA research for it to be statistically valid. Unfortunately, schools with less than 60% engagement will not be able to take part at this time.
4. Scholarship place is valid for the academic year 2022/23 only and is not transferable. Teachers must meet the eligibility criteria set out by TCD's admission policies.

The Application Criteria

The scheme will reward schools showing evidence of progress and innovation in the three core practices. Details and descriptions of each level of award are described in our Features of Quality and more information about the core practices is available in our Practitioners Guide.

Timeline for 2021/22 (subject to change due to Covid):

Ongoing   Individual School Consultations

March 31st   Application Clinic

May 3rd   Give permission for your Planning Document to be shared with the judges
                Without this consent, schools cannot be considered for an award

May 4th   Final date of submission of applications

May 30th   Announcement of awards to schools

June 30th   PGCert registration closes

Application Completion and Submission

Application for the School of Distinction award is made via our School Planning Document.

This document has been built in Google Sheets to facilitate collaboration and contributions by multiple members of staff. There are seven different tabs in the workbook titled:

1. School information
2. Pathways to College
3. School Progression
4. Mentoring
5. Leadership in Learning (Students)
6. Leadership in Learning (Teachers)
7. Reflection.

Full instructions for the completion of this document are included in an "Info Sheet" at the start. The SoD application is designed to be used as an annual planning document for the implementation of the three core practices and as such is a working document. All information about teachers in charge, time frames, challenges and skills integration sections are included to help your planning but will not be part of our assessment process, although they may help us to develop systems that reduce these challenges and barriers. The notes section can be used to write notes to the judging panel if necessary.

At the close of business on the 4th of May, all edits and additions will be final. You will not be able to add or amend after this time as the document will be shared directly with our judging panel for award consideration.

Give permission for your Planning Document to be shared with the judges by completing this form on or before the 3rd of May. We will be unable to enter schools for judges' consideration without this permission.

Assessment of Award

The award will be assessed by a panel of independent experts in the field of educational innovation. Canvasing of judges is not acceptable.

Contact Us

Contact Claire (claire@ta21.ie) or Deirdre (deirdre@ta21.ie) with any programme or application queries or chat with us in our fortnightly Staffroom Chats, details of upcoming meetings are shared through our staffroom mailer.

Resources

TheStaffRoom.ie is a space where secondary school teachers can engage in a community of practice, find and share resources and lesson plans, and chat with and ask questions of other teachers and the Trinity Access team.

The site contains information about upcoming events, information booklets for teachers and other useful information for teachers in Trinity Access schools or anyone looking to implement our three core practices; Pathways to College, Leadership in Learning & Mentoring.

Further information on the Trinity Access projects can be found at www.tcd.ie/trinityaccess

Further information on College Awareness Week is at www.collegeaware.ie/

Link to DES School Self Evaluation Requirements

According to the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Guidelines 2016-2021 Post-Primary, the Department has developed a quality framework for schools, which is available in its publication Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools. This quality framework is intended to inform both school self-evaluation and external evaluation. The Trinity Access: Schools of Distinction model supports much of the quality framework for schools with the specific areas highlighted in the table below.

Practice	Relevant SSE Guideline Domains & Standards
Implementation of a 'whole school' approach to Trinity Access	Teachers' collective / collaborative practice: ● Teachers value and engage in professional development and professional collaboration ● Teachers work together to devise learning opportunities for students across and beyond the curriculum Leading teaching & learning: ● School leaders promote a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment ● School leaders foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student ● School leaders foster teacher professional development that enriches teachers' and students' learning Leading school development: ● School leaders communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation ● School leaders lead the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation

	● School leaders manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and changes in education Developing Leadership Capacity: ● School leaders empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles ● School leaders build professional networks with other school leaders
Pathways to College	Learner Outcomes: ● Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners Learner Experiences: ● Students experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning
Mentoring	Learner Outcomes: ● Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners ● Students have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand themselves and their relationships Learner Experiences: ● Students grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive ● Students experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning Leading School Development ● School leaders build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community Developing Leadership Capacity ● School leaders promote and facilitate the development of student voice, student participation, and student leadership
Leadership in Learning	Learner Outcomes: ● Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners ● Students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the post-primary curriculum

	Learner Experience:
	- Students engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities - Students grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive - Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning - Students experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning Teachers' Individual Practice: - Selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning - Selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intention and the students' learning needs Teacher Collaborative Practice: - Teachers value and engage in professional development and professional collaboration - Teachers work together to devise learning opportunities for students across and beyond the curriculum - Teachers contribute to building whole staff capacity by sharing their expertise Leading in Learning & Teaching: - Promote a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching, and assessment Leading School Development: - School leaders build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community Developing Leadership Capacity: - School leaders promote and facilitate the development of student voice, student participation, and student leadership

Link to DEIS Reporting

The DEIS (Delivery Equality of Opportunity in Our Schools) Plan 2017, identifies 8 measures for DEIS schools to consider when assessing their school in relation to overall DEIS targets. Below is a table summarising how the 4 core practices of the TA21 model links in with the DEIS measures and the specific actions that have measurable impacts. References are made to Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-Primary Schools & Inspectorate Evaluation Studies. This is a sample summary for information purposes only and not considered an exhaustive list.

1. **Retention:**

These are references to both Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-Primary Schools & Inspectorate Evaluation Studies that have been used to inform these actions and their links to this theme. The theme of retention focuses on the importance of keeping children in school, identifying those at risk of early leaving, and taking action to reduce or eliminate factors that cause students to drop out.

- *Action planning for retention evinced good practice in supporting targeted students at risk of early school-leaving, and in broader initiatives to increase participation in school activities*
- *Inspectors' observations on effective practice included the following*
  'The excellent pastoral care system and positive staff-student relationships in school, the one-to-one counselling for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties provided by the SCP, and curricular and social support provided for Traveller students are among some of the highly effective [retention] strategies.' (2011)

Measurable Impact (school survey data)	Action	Core Practice
Student-Teacher Relationship	Talk by Expert/Professional	Pathways to College
	High-Quality Mentor Relationship	Mentoring
	Mentor Type: Staff in School	Mentoring
	Number of Sessions	Mentoring
	21st Century Teaching and Learning Exposure	Leadership in Learning

2. **Transitions**:

These are references to both Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-Primary Schools & Inspectorate Evaluation Studies that have been used to inform these actions and their links to this theme. Progression is very closely linked to attendance and retention. It puts a spotlight on the key moves from one stage of education to the next: from primary to post-primary; from junior cycle to senior cycle; and from post-primary to continuing education and the world of work.

Progression to continuing education is especially important because of the overarching aim of the DEIS action plan: to give all students equal educational opportunities. The tracking of students beyond their post-primary school careers is a crucial aspect of planning for progression.

- *Providing opportunities for students to experience continuing education options and the world of work*
- *Gather and use data on the progression rates and paths of former students, and the dispositions of current students, to inform planning to improve progression*
- *Ensure that high expectations are communicated to students and that students are supported to realise them*

Measurable Impact (school survey data)	Action	Core Practice
Education Aspirations and Goals	College Related Project Work	Pathways to College
	Talk by Expert/Professional	Pathways to College
	High-Quality Mentor Relationship	Mentoring
	21st Century Teaching and Learning Exposure	Leadership in Learning
Confidence in College Success	Career Fairs	Pathways to College
	Talk by Expert/Professional	Pathways to College
	High-Quality Mentor Relationship	Mentoring
	21st Century Teaching and Learning Exposure	Leadership in Learning
	Any Participation in Leadership in Learning Activities	Leadership in Learning
	Active Participation in Leadership in Learning Activities	Leadership in Learning

3. Examination Attainment:

These are references to both Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-Primary Schools & Inspectorate Evaluation Studies that have been used to inform these actions and their links to this theme. Examination attainment focuses on attainment in the certificate examinations, and also includes target-setting, strategies and monitoring of progress concerning students' outcomes in school-based assessments and examinations.

- *Inspectors commended teaching approaches that supported active learning and got students thinking about how they were learning.*
- *Selecting and implementing teaching and learning approaches … that challenge and empower students*
- *Implement practical strategies to raise students' expectations and attainment*

Measurable Impact (school survey data)	Action	Core Practice
Active Engagement in Learning	College Related Project Work	Pathways to College
	Career Fairs	Pathways to College
	Talk by Expert Professional	Pathways to College
	High-Quality Mentor Relationship	Mentoring
	Mentor Type: Staff in School	Mentoring
	Mentor Type: Outside Expert	Mentoring
	21st Century Teaching and Learning Exposure	Leadership in Learning
	Active Participation in Leadership in Learning Activities	Leadership in Learning

4. Partnerships:

These are references to both Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post-Primary Schools & Inspectorate Evaluation Studies that have been used to inform these actions and their links to this theme, Partnership with parents and others. The DEIS action plan supports schools to develop

partnerships with parents and with the community. Schools are also expected to develop links with other schools and colleges, for example in transfer programmes from post-primary school to third-level colleges.

The theme of partnership includes links with other education providers, especially those offering continuing education. While evaluation reports placed most emphasis on partnership with parents, they also reflect a positive picture of strong links that DEIS schools have forged with their nearest third-level institutions. Access programmes and events that provide students with opportunities to visit these institutions were frequently commended, in particular where schools were taking a 'joined-up' view of planning for progression and this area of partnership.

- *Forging helpful links with other education providers and with external agencies*
- *Ensure systematic co-operation and communication between the school and other agencies working to support students and their families*

5. **Other Areas:**

Measurable Impact (school survey data)	Action	Core Practice
Wellbeing	Workplace visit	Pathways to college
	Talk by college/university rep	Pathways to college
	High-Quality Mentor Relationship	Mentoring
	21st Century Teaching and Learning Exposure	Leadership in Learning

Measurable Impact (school survey data)	Action	Core Practice
Student Voice	High-Quality Mentor Relationship	Mentoring
	21st Century Teaching and Learning Exposure	Leadership in Learning
	Any Participation in Leadership in Learning Activities	Leadership in Learning
	Active Participation in Leadership in Learning Activities	Leadership in Learning