



*Institute of Technology  
Blanchardstown*

*Institiúid Teicneolaíochta  
Baile Bhlainséir*

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2019

**Transforming into a Technological University**



# Foreword to the Strategic Plan

In my new role as President, I am pleased to introduce, at an important time in our development, our new strategic plan.

With the help of our strategic plan working group, we established a process which identified six institutional priorities over the next three academic years as we strive to become part of a Technological University. The culmination of this inclusive consultative process is a road map of what ITB aspires to achieve. It is a clear statement of our future direction and has the support of our stakeholders, staff and students.

Although the current climate that faces all third level institutes is complex and changing, ITB's current position and relative financial health is a result of sensible and prudent decision-making within ITB that will allow us to continue to move forward, change and grow.

Above all else, ITB will continue to offer relevant and flexible programmes, make education accessible to all, and provide an unrivalled student experience. The education we provide will make a real difference to the lives of our students and the community in which we serve.

**Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan**  
President, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown



On behalf of the Governing Body, I welcome the publication of this strategic plan.

In preparing this plan, which is critical to our transformation to a Technological University, the working group engaged in a wide consultation process across the Institute, enterprise and wider stakeholder groups, in thorough, open and engaging discussion.

The Governing Body believes that the Institute is central to future economic development in the region and that there are broad social and cultural advantages to widening participation in higher education.

The capacity of the Institute will increase in the coming years, driven by demographic trends in our region, together with growth from non-traditional areas. The need for lifelong learning and up-skilling among the workforce will also contribute to growth.

Increased capacity will be very good for the Institute, but it will also bring serious challenges in terms of funding and operational matters. We need to face these challenges openly, confidently and with a strong resolve to find practical solutions.

**Professor Thomas Collins**  
Chairman, Governing Body of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown



## The History of ITB

The Institute was established by an Act of the Oireachtas in 1999. At the time, one of its stated purposes was to provide opportunities for a rapidly growing population in Dublin North-West, which was under-represented in higher education.

Having worked to address this need since opening, the Institute has flourished and can now count itself as a significant provider of higher education in the region and beyond. It has positioned itself firmly within the commercial, social and educational fabric of Blanchardstown and Dublin North-West and has become a vital resource for its multiple stakeholders.

We take pride in our accomplishments, yet share a belief that we have even greater potential to realise. In the future, our core challenge is to maintain continuity while simultaneously achieving transformation. This document sets out precisely how we plan to do this, where we want to focus and the progress we expect to achieve.



*Block A - ITB's first building, opened September 1999*

## The Future for ITB

This plan outlines our main aims over the next three years as we strive to become part of a Technological University. We fully expect that by 2019, we will have furthered our objective of making a real difference in peoples' lives, economically, socially and culturally.

With a focus on transformation by 2019, we expect that we will enrol a greater number and a more diverse mix of students and retention levels will increase. Our constituents will report markedly improved levels of satisfaction with all manner of campus supports and services.

We will continue to improve academic quality for individual schools and departments. The nature and quality of academic staff relationships with our students is an aspect of the ITB education experience that is highly valued.

In executing this plan, we will create an environment where this is further enriched through dynamism and imagination in our teaching and increased attention to scholarship and research. We will aid this by drawing on the strengths of our partners in the TU4Dublin Alliance, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT).

Dissolution of 'false divides' among engagement, teaching and learning, research and innovation and achievement of a much deeper integration among them will support advancement of interdisciplinary programmes and activities.



## Our Mission, Vision and Values

The mission of the Institute is to continue to serve its students and the community by meeting the skills needs in the economy and increasing the level of participation in higher education and training, particularly in Dublin North-West and its environs.

The Institute will do this by achieving consistently high standards of relevance and quality in teaching, research, development and consultancy.

ITB will offer a welcoming and supportive environment to students from all educational and social backgrounds and to adults wishing to increase or update their level of technical skills.

Our vision is that ITB will be part of the Technological University for Dublin and will be nationally recognised as a leader in providing high-quality higher education.

The values that inform our work are:

### Community

We acknowledge the diversity of people involved in our work. We respect the different role played by each person. We listen with patience and understanding. We work to build genuine relationships founded on acceptance and trust.

### Enjoyment

We aim to enjoy our work and derive fulfilment from it. We value positive attitudes throughout our workplace.

### Excellence

We strive for excellence in the provision of internal and external services, courses and programmes.

### Success

We will celebrate our achievements.

# TU4Dublin - A Technological University for the Greater Dublin Region

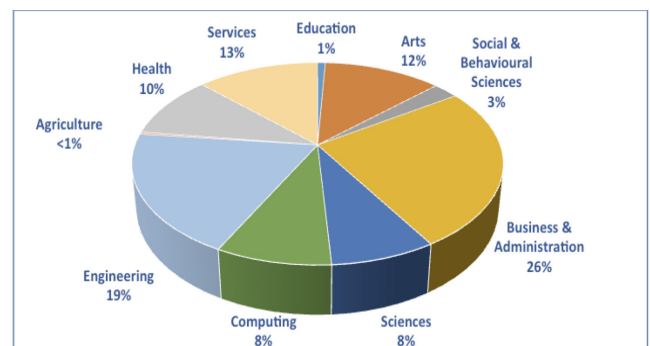
Technological Universities are being established as a new type of higher education institution in the Irish higher education landscape. The main distinguishing characteristics of an Irish Technological University are:

- An emphasis on practice-based learning, with programmes of study closely related to labour market skills needs and incorporating work-based learning/internships/ work placement as appropriate.
- A strategic commitment to the provision of career-focused and practice-led programmes of education at levels 6 to 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications, ranging from Higher Certificate to Doctoral Level, and including modern apprenticeship programmes.
- A priority placed on the employability of graduates and on the development of generic work-related competencies.
- A focus on enterprise-aligned courses of study, and on industry-focused research and innovation that is directly relevant and contributes to the economic, social and cultural development of the university's region.
- A commitment to work closely with industry, enterprise, community, and other HEIs in the region to support national objectives for higher education as they relate, for example, to the provision of increased access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners, the promotion of co-ordinated academic planning at regional level, and enhanced institutional cooperation and collaboration to leverage the strengths of individual institutions and improve the performance of the system as a whole.

In moving forward, the Institute also recognises the strengths of working with partner Institutes of Technology, DIT and ITT to form TU4Dublin. The TU4Dublin (our current working name) will become a new type of university for Dublin and will be built on an already significant higher education profile.

The profile of the TU4Dublin Alliance will include:

- 27,000+ students, including 13% of higher education students nationally and 1 in 4 in the Greater Dublin Region (GDR), with undergraduate provision across the major disciplines as shown here
- TU4Dublin will support 7% of the research students in GDR and 42% of research students in the Institute of Technology sector
- Over 1 in 3 of new entrants in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) in GDR will be registered with TU4Dublin and over ½ of NFQ Level 6&7 students
- More than 1 in 5 of new entrants in TU4Dublin will be in nationally-targeted socio-economic groups, with almost 15% of new entrants as mature students
- There will be 2,300 staff within TU4Dublin, of which 1,200 are Academic
- TU4Dublin will continue to operate across its 3 main campuses, while developing an enhanced Digital Campus
- TU4Dublin will be a leader in lifelong learning and executive education opportunities



*TU4Dublin Alliance anticipated undergraduate provision*

## Our TU4Dublin

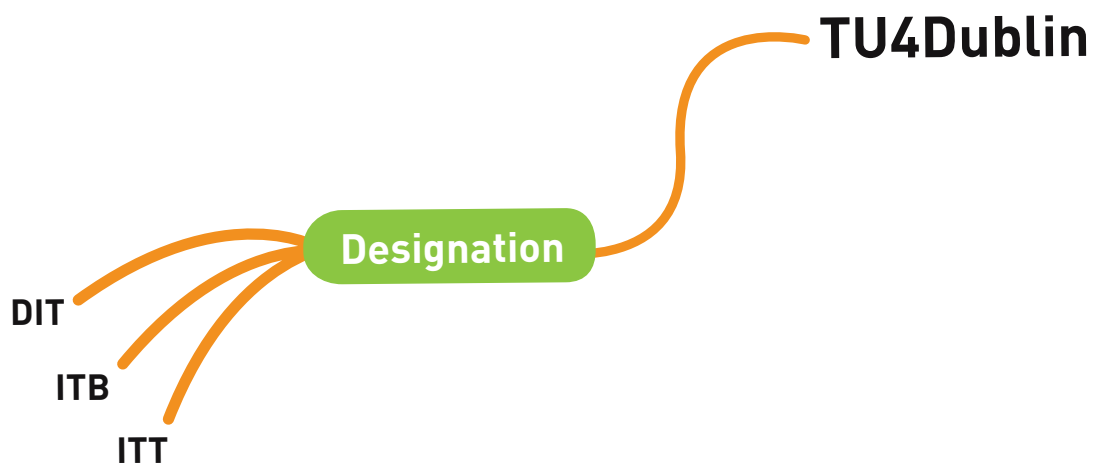
The main theme of this strategic plan is to achieve designation as a Technological University within the plan's lifetime.

The three TU4Dublin partners are working towards creating an exciting, vibrant and modern university, that will provide cohesive and differentiated technological education in Dublin. TU4 Dublin will be deeply embedded in the economic, civic, social, creative and cultural life of the Greater Dublin region. Combining the collective experiences, capabilities, passion and resources of the three institutions, student-centred learning environments are being developed on three physical campuses and through the TU4Dublin digital campus.

TU4Dublin also aims to enhance its contribution to the Greater Dublin Region and the country as a whole, through globally significant research and innovation that supports enhanced competitiveness. Our TU4Dublin will provide practice-led and research informed higher education of the highest quality, for a new style of university graduate, who is innovative, creative and entrepreneurial.

Key strategic actions need to be taken by all three Institutes to align functions to those of a Technological University and to ensure the criteria for designation is achieved.

This plan outlines the strategic intent as identified by ITB. It is grounded in a range of current National policies (see appendix)





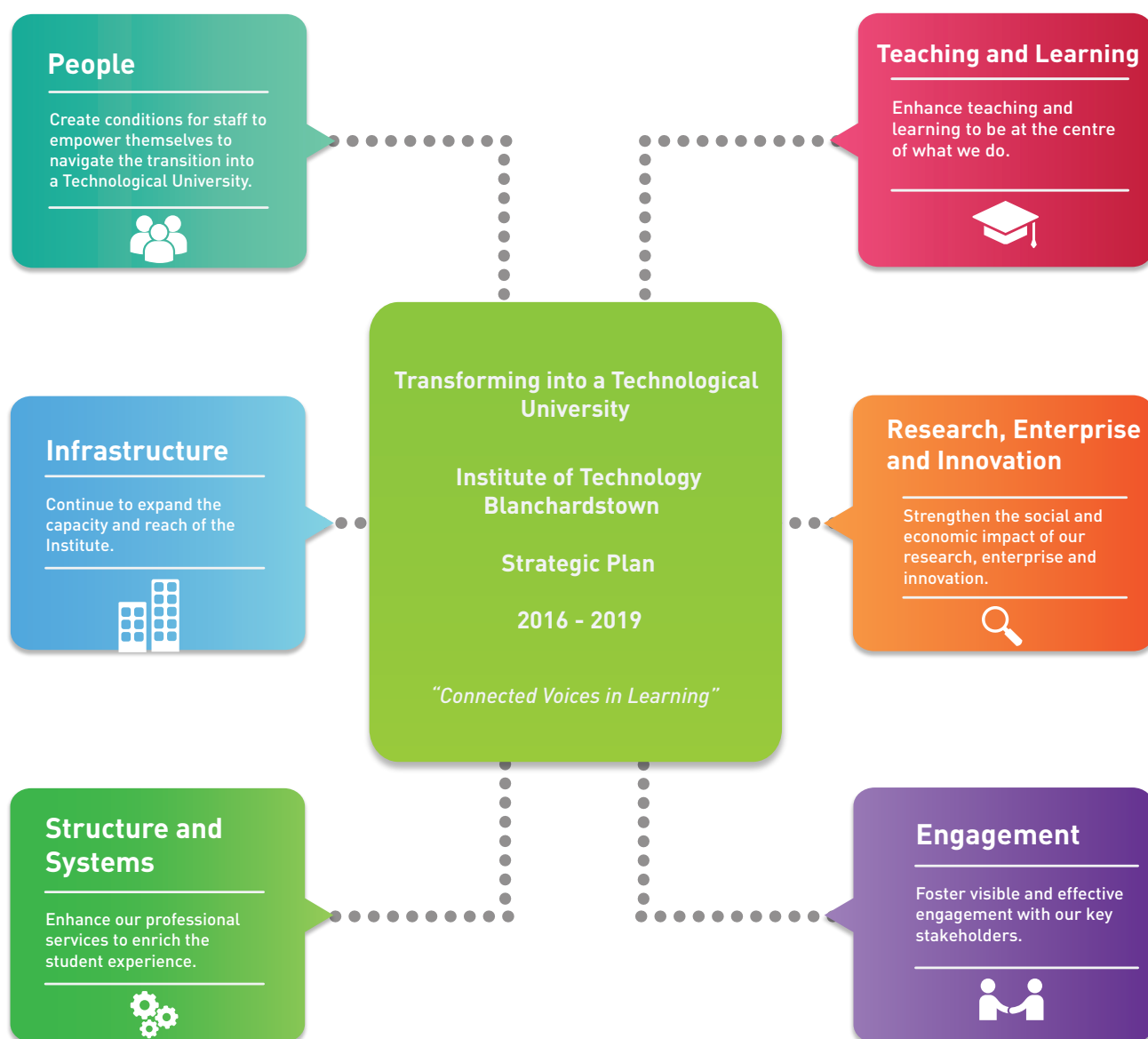




## ITB Primary Strategic Intent

Our primary strategic intent, is that all individuals on the campus act and behave as if we are a Technological University in advance of formal designation.

In partnership with our TU4Dublin partners we have developed our strategic plan in a co-ordinated way to support our student experience and our designation as a Technological University. In the case of ITB specifically, we have identified six primary strategic goals.



*Overview of our strategic plan 2016 - 2019*





The Student  
Mentoring Programme



Robert  
Student  
Mentoring Programme

Session 4 - How to become a  
Lean Mean CA Machine (and  
still have time for pizza!)





# Teaching and Learning

*Enhance teaching and learning to be at the centre of what we do.*

We aim to achieve this with the following **actions** and outcomes:

## 1. Create a rich learning environment through an innovative, flexible and multi-disciplinary curriculum model for all students.

- At least 30% of students registered on a programme that leads to an award, of at least honours bachelor degree level (NFQ level 8), will fall within one or more of the following classes:
  - a) Students who are registered on a programme that is provided on a flexible basis, such as by means of part-time, on-line or distance learning;
  - b) Students who are registered on a programme that has been designed, and is being delivered, with the involvement of business, enterprise, the professions and other related stakeholders.
- TU4Dublin graduate attributes will be agreed and mechanisms implemented to ensure programme alignment with these attributes, while accommodating some personalisation of learning, including work experience options.
- A 25% increase in full-time students with flexible pathway options, including alternative progression routes, work placement options, blended programme options, on-line programmes, multi-disciplinary options and modules with significant support offered by learning technologies.

## 2. Expand our innovative use of technology to further enhance the teaching and learning environment.

- Increase in the usage and application of virtual learning environments.
- Develop digital portfolios to allow students to create accessible records of their learning.
- Leverage digital technology to support teaching, learning and assessment in a digital environment.

## 3. Continue to develop a learner-centred approach to quality enhancement for all students.

- Create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all learners assisted by developing and adopting the principles of universal design in teaching and learning.
- Further develop peer-mentoring and first year experience initiatives.
- Integrate learner analytics, National student survey output and quality assurance reviews into academic quality assurance systems for teaching and learning.
- Professional development and excellence in teaching is recognised and reinforced by engaging with learning teaching and technology centres.
- Participation in and evaluation of U-Multirank as an effective means of benchmarking with other higher education institutions internationally, and creating a context for self-evaluation.
- Continue to engage with the HEA strategic dialogue process.
- Participation in USI, QQI, HEA and the National Forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education.





# Research, Enterprise and Innovation

*Strengthen the social and economic impact of our research, enterprise and innovation.*

We aim to achieve this with the following **actions** and outcomes:

## 1. Develop the research culture to foster and support research, innovation and enterprise initiatives.

- Enhance participation in structured Doctorate programmes, in association with our Graduate Research School with Technological University alliance partners.
- All full time academic staff engaged in the supervision of students registered on a doctoral degree level programme will have a record of continued research.
- Achieve a 30% increase in the number of research partnerships, including broader participation of those under-represented in research.

## 2. Broaden research, enterprise and innovation capacity, build capability and enhance performance.

- The number of students registered on a programme that leads to an award of Masters or PhD degree is 4% (or more) of those on a programme leading to an honours bachelors degree or higher.
- The Institute provides programmes that lead to awards to doctoral degree level and the academic staff and students of the Institute conduct research in at least three fields of education.
- Adopt a research action plan with TU4Dublin alliance partners to support 7% of the number of students registered on a programme leading to at least honours bachelor degree level, as research students within 10 years; Within five years, increase areas of doctoral research to at least five fields of education.
- Generate a 10% increase year-on year in research income.
- Expand enterprise activity and develop 2 research centres.

## 3. Deepen the integration of research and scholarship into our academic programmes.

- At least 80% of the full-time academic staff, who are engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level and conduct research, hold a doctoral degree themselves.
- Initiatives are in place to ensure teaching and learning activities are informed by research.
- All full-time academic staff, engaged in the supervision of students registered on a doctoral degree programme, hold a doctoral degree.
- Innovation and research have a demonstrable positive social and economic effect on business, enterprise, the professions and other related stakeholders in the region.
- Improved visibility of research activities of staff.
- 10% increase year on year, in social and community-based research initiatives.



# Engagement

*Foster visible and effective engagement with our key stakeholders.*

We aim to achieve this with the following **actions** and outcomes:

## 1. Engage visibly and effectively with our key stakeholders, both nationally and internationally.

- Further develop strong links with business, enterprise, the professions and other stakeholders in the region to support civic and industry engagement.
- Ensure procedures are in place for the development of programmes, that respond to the needs of the Institute's stakeholders, showing evidence of engagement with industry in programme design and delivery.
- Undertake a socio-economic impact study of potential a Technological University in the Greater Dublin Region, while maintaining the regional remit of the Institute.

## 2. Promote a culture of collaboration with our communities.

- Processes and mechanisms are developed to capture industry and community feedback, while engaging with civic, social and community partners and alumni in the region and beyond.
- Participation in the Carnegie community engagement first-time classification framework.
- Alignment of professional development taking into account policies of the National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

## 3. Enhance the internationalisation of the Institute.

- Maintain current number of registered international students.
- Increase number of outgoing students by 10% year on year.
- Collaborate with institutions that provide higher education outside the State, including on joint research projects and for the purpose of provision of programmes.
- Provides opportunities for staff and students of institutions that provide higher education outside the State, to teach, learn or conduct research within the Institute.
- Develop a strategy for incorporation of internationalisation into all academic programmes.







# People

*Create conditions for staff to empower themselves to navigate the transition into a Technological University.*

We aim to achieve this with the following **actions** and outcomes:

## 1. Enable individual staff and teams of staff to grow professionally and personally through a transformational learning environment.

- At least 90% of the full-time academic staff, engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level, hold a Master's degree or Doctoral degree.
- At least 45% of full-time academic staff of the Institute, engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level, hold a doctoral degree.
- Encourage staff development such that within 10 years, the Institute will increase the proportion of its full-time academic staff holding a doctoral degree from at least 45% to at least 65%.
- Use 'creative and agile thinking' in our approach to transformational work.
- Enhance opportunities for dialogue, team participation and experimentation with how we conduct our business

## 2. Support the evolving change and development needs of our people.

- Enhance our personal development systems.
- Provide training opportunities to enhance skills and offer career or leadership development programmes, including support for lecturers using on-line learning platforms.
- Promote effective, transparent and participative decision making.
- Support change management initiatives by offering coaching and mentoring programmes to support autonomy in developing new work practices.
- Support effective, regular and open communication fora.







# Infrastructure

*Continue to expand the capacity and reach of the Institute.*

We aim to achieve this with the following **actions** and outcomes:

## 1. Increase student numbers while fostering student diversity through developing innovative academic programmes.

- Achieve a year-on-year increase in student numbers, to reach in excess of 4,500 by the year 2020, meeting regional demand, while maintaining a balance of students studying at NFQ levels 6-10.
- Facilitate and support our students that enter through access routes, while maintaining our proportion of access students, in line with demographic needs of the region and student demand.
- Improve retention rates by increasing the progression of students from first year into second year to 75% (approximate increase by 10%).
- Develop new models of apprenticeship and skills training, including pathways from further education to higher education.

## 2. Develop the physical and digital capacity of the Institute to expand its reach and impact.

- Deliver a Digital Campus in partnership with our TU4Dublin alliance partners.
- Resource and construct two new buildings on campus, to accommodate projected increases in student numbers in a green and healthy environment.
- Increase utilisation of our physical campus for year-round use.





# Structures and Systems

*Enhance our professional services to enrich the student experience.*

We aim to achieve this with the following **actions** and outcomes:

## 1. Forge deeper integration with our TU4 Dublin alliance partners to achieve designation as a Technological University.

- Agree appropriate and effective governance structures concerning academic, administrative, management and student representational matters for the Technological University.
- Communicate and engage with staff and representative bodies, regarding the vision and positioning for and process of achieving designation as a Technological University.
- Actively engage with the evolving organisational design proposals for the Technological University, regarding adjustments to structures that may impact on the Institute.
- Actively engage with evolving policy alignment proposals for the Technological University regarding adjustments to operating policies and procedures that may impact on the Institute.
- Actively engage with partners in HEA regional clusters, HEA Dublin/Leinster Pillar II.

## 2. Enhance the range and effectiveness of professional services for the future Technological University.

- Develop a service charter for engagements between staff and students.
- Re-develop a strategic marketing and communications plan.
- Develop professional services while providing comprehensive student supports service, for all learners, including a visible focus for part-time learners.

## 3. Operate in a sustainable, ethical way and in a financially responsible manner.

- Continue to have integrated, coherent and effective governance structures in place, concerning academic, administrative and management matters.
- Continue to improve procedures for quality assurance and quality enhancement.
- Broaden the base of independent revenue generation.







## The Outcome

It is hard to be precise about what ITB will look like in three years time, but if we pursue our new direction with vigour, the Institute will show some of the following characteristics. ITB will:

- Be designated as part of a Technological University, following collaboration with our TU4Dublin partners.
- Have a much larger student population, with more part-time, on-line and work based students;
- Be known for making education accessible to people previously excluded by age, social, economic or educational backgrounds;
- Have diverse sources of income;
- Engage in significant research activity in most academic areas;
- Be home to several new campus buildings;
- Be distinguishable from other institutions by the excellence of its teaching and other activities;

We are proposing to develop transformational change capability, on the ITB campus. This will be achieved by transforming the Institute into a pioneering center for innovation and experimentation, within a campus of a future Technological University.

Thus, our primary strategic intent, is that all individuals on the campus act and behave as if we are a Technological University in advance of formal designation.

## ‘Connected Voices in Learning – Here We Come’

*In 2016, in collaboration with AHEAD, ITB and some of our first year creative digital media students created a brand new exhibition entitled ‘Connected Voices in Learning’.*

*Behind every student lies a personal story; a journey through an educational landscape that for some appear familiar and for others strange even foreign. Their individual voices tell of life stories shaped by circumstance, happenstance and opportunity. Their words, images and designs expose their hearts and minds, a rich palette of artefacts symbolising the humanity of diversity - each unique but connected, representing individual threads in a complex, colourful pattern.*

*A postage stamp was once a key medium to connect individuals and their stories. It carried the power to transport your personal thoughts and feelings around the globe. The postal service was entrusted with this responsibility, a purveyor of your private communications who guided each unique letter through the great interconnected public communication network. In a sense it reminds us of our role - interconnected with each other to provide the guidance, support, direction and love to ensure that each learner arrives at their chosen destination.*

*Our students have revealed the richness of their personal learning stories by contributing personally designed stamps and participating in the creation of an inspiring group poem under the guidance of poet Colm Keegan.*

*We are very proud of their work. The student experience lies at the heart of what we do here at ITB.*

*Please read and enjoy ‘Here We Come’.*

# CONNECTED VOICES IN LEARNING

## Here we come

Here we come, from all directions  
like leaves on the wind in autumn  
lone notes in the ebb and flow  
of morning traffic.  
Hopping off buses, jumping  
out of our parents' cars,  
waving goodbye or just walking.  
Some talking to others, most not,  
this is the first day after all –  
we don't know anybody  
and we're trying to play it cool.  
looking around at where we are  
or staring down, at a map,  
a timetable, a mobile phone.  
Drawn towards the same place  
with that name we've been savouring,  
repeating to our parents,  
our friends, to anyone who'll listen.  
This morning, we're going to college.

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College –  
stepping into our tomorrow.  
Weighed down with back packs,  
folders, tablets, laptops,  
pens, coffees, bottled water,  
for some that's plenty, maybe  
too much.

For others – that's nothing, because  
we're carrying something else –  
anxiety, or something bigger, maybe;  
the hangover of a one night stand  
gone wrong,  
an argument with a cheating lover,  
a recent death in the family,  
a problem with drink, or drugs, or both.  
Or maybe we've once been told  
that we're simply the wrong sex,  
the wrong religion, too old,  
the wrong colour, not fit enough,  
disabled in some way that didn't make  
the grade before.  
Maybe school just never felt right,  
maybe this is our second try,  
maybe that's keeping us back all  
the time  
holding us down, like chains  
or anchors.  
Maybe we're here, but ready to bolt  
ready to throw it all away,  
but we won't, not yet.

In our hearts  
we've stowed away hope  
humanity's oldest motivation  
and like flames inside our ribcages  
we hold our dreams,  
some almost extinguished  
some undiscovered like distant stars  
and all we ask from you is that  
you see this  
and give us a few things.  
Consistency,  
an environment that cares for  
our minds, our bodies, our souls  
somewhere to make friends.  
A system of mentors we can trust  
to turn up in both senses of the word.  
To look for what we can't see in  
ourselves.  
Experts who are out there,  
still learning themselves.  
Eccentric, stern, passionate,  
always inspiring us to work  
harder than we want to  
harder than we think we can.  
And if you want to know  
how hard it is for us, just ask.  
The best of you always do.

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Give us these things  
and we all become part of the plan.  
A connected part of the whole.  
Like the intricate parts of a watch  
but less separate.  
So much more than just one cog,  
more like the people who invented  
the watch itself,  
or tracked the sun through the sky,  
plotted the cosmos or mapped  
the soft machinery of the human heart.  
Here we come, from all directions  
like leaves on the wind in autumn  
students who want to stand  
as graduates not just of a college  
but of a way of life, a way of thinking,  
a way of believing that anyone can be  
the person they dream of being.





## Creative Digital Media // Spring 2016 Contributors

Jessica Abhilash  
Megan Bredin  
Stephen Coyle  
Bartosz S Domanski  
Corey Dowdall  
Stewart Gooney  
Conor Gunn  
Shannon Keogh  
Rachel Mc Cormack  
Rachel Menton  
Dwayne Nolan  
Dylan Owens

David Reddy  
Kerri Sheridan  
Majdeh Bazleh  
Paul Brennan  
Aoife Burke  
Conor Cregan  
Neil Doughty  
Lee Doyle  
Padraig Hawkins  
John Kavanagh  
Jordan Kelleher  
Aqsa Khalid

Jonathan Mc Guinness  
Sarah Mooney  
Ryan Nolan  
Aisling T Power  
Dylan Reilly  
Tadgh Brennan  
Simone Canavan  
Peter Dennen  
Mikaela Egan  
Ashley Farrell  
Francis Freeney  
Tobi Ilori

Louise Kavanagh  
Paulina Macierzynska  
Liam Mallon  
Zithelo Mthombeni  
Eoghan O Carroll  
Niall Pringle  
Philip Roche  
John Braga  
Mark Coyle  
Amanda Culligan  
Conor Digglin  
Leanne Fisher

Casey Garland  
Ian Kelly  
Sean Mason  
Shauna Mc Cormack  
Alan Murphy  
Andrew Rahaman  
Conor Ryan  
Maria Stokes  
Taylor Whelan  
Diogo Chagas  
Alicja Kosinska  
Sayonara Bittencourt

# CONNECTED VOICES IN LEARNING

**ahead**  
Association for Higher Education Access & Disability

**itb**  
Institute of Technology  
Blanchardstown  
Blanchardstown  
Bally Blinnah

## Key informing policy documents for this strategic plan

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