



Student Belonging Forum

April 2024

Key messages from our students

The shortage of affordable student accommodation near the campus is a key obstacle to building a sense of belonging. Commuting long distances to the campus prevents students from engaging in extra-curricular activities.

Smaller class sizes, with interactive teaching and group discussions, support a greater sense of belonging. They give students an opportunity to interact and learn with their peers. More manageable workloads and timely feedback could help students connect more to their learning and their lecturers.

Participating in Clubs, Societies, volunteering, the Students' Union and social events provide students with valuable opportunities to interact and connect outside the classroom. However, not all students can benefit from these opportunities because of their circumstances.

Some student cohorts are particularly challenged when it comes to building a sense of community. These include international students, postgraduate research students and students with disabilities, whose personal assistant cover only extends to teaching hours. Although great strides have been made by Buildings and Estates, our campus remains inaccessible in some areas.

More non-commercial social and seating spaces would enable students to meet and interact at intervals throughout the day. A dedicated social space for postgraduate students would be welcome, as would more dedicated spaces for Irish speakers. There is also a need for more group study spaces.

Orientation is a critically important time to help students settle in. It is particularly important for international students, who are new to Ireland. We should consider re-orientation sessions at the beginning of all years to help students understand the structure of the year ahead.

