DCU's QuID Initiative

A Collective Leadership Approach to Quality Enhancement

Dr Rachel Keegan

Director of Quality and Institutional Insights

DCU Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University

- Collective Leadership approach to Quality

- QuID (Quality Improvement & Development Fund)

- 2024 Call: Transitioning AI from a Treat to a Tool

- Lessons Learned from QuID

DCU Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University

Collective Leadership at DCU

Our Organisational Purpose

Our Mission
To transform lives and societies

Our Values
Student Focussed, Open, Inclusive, Collegial, Collaborative, Ambitious

Our Vision
To be a leading innovative European University distinguished by the quality of the DCU experience, and the impact of our teaching and research on our stakeholders and on issues of global concern

Our Guiding Philosophy

- People
- Focus
- Impact

Our Strategic Pillars

- Pioneer a Transformative Student Experience
- Value and Develop our Staff and Community
- Advance our Research Reputation and Impact
- Enhance Local and International Engagement
- Optimise Organisational Resilience and Readiness

Our Drivers

- Collective Leadership
- Innovation, Creativity & Enterprise (ICE)
- Sustainable Development
- Agility

Collective Leadership

Collective leadership is the idea of 'leading where you are'. In DCU, leadership is not confined to management roles but is diffuse and accessible to all. People at all levels across DCU are empowered to identify opportunities, pursue new ideas, convince colleagues and management and bring their ideas to fruition, by taking them through the relevant approval processes.

Fostering a culture that empowers staff to lead, innovate, and influence

Long-standing commitment reflected in our approach to QE: QuID, quality reviews, and the Quality Promotion Committee

QA from compliance to culture
Embeds shared ownership across all activities
Develops leadership talent
Increases motivation and drives innovation from the ground up

QuID (Quality Improvement & Development Fund)

Established in 2012

Annual funding call to support community-led quality enhancement initiatives across DCU that impact our staff, students, and stakeholders.

This scheme embraces collective leadership as a core principle, recognising that staff from all areas, grades, career stages and roles can be empowered to identify opportunities for improvement, pursue new ideas, and effect change.

Students can also be involved in projects with staff lead.

Overseen by the Quality Promotion Committee

Themes aligned with strategic priorities, a contemporary issue in higher education or a recurring theme from quality review processes.

BETWEEN 2012 AND 2024, QUID HAS AWARDED € 408,352 TO 165 PROJECTS, INVOLVING 81 DIFFERENT SCHOOLS AND UNITS

Sample Previous Initiatives

Public Access to DCU Library Collection

In 2023 QuID funding helped acquire high-quality LED-lit display cabinets, enabling the Library to extend a DCU-wide programme of exhibitions and displays to the Cregan Library.
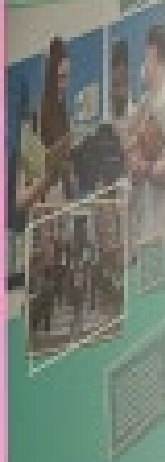
The have since curated three major exhibitions in the O'Reilly Library, including 'Charles J. Haughey: Politics in a changing Ireland'.

Sample Previous Initiatives

Promoting and Supporting the Wellbeing of Students

The PAWS (Promoting and Supporting the Wellbeing of Students) Project at DCU brought therapy dogs from Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind to campus to help alleviate exam stress post-Covid.

Sample Previous Initiatives

Virtual Reality and User Innovation

Colleagues in the School of Psychology obtained QuID Funding in 2023 to acquire VR headsets for a series of workshops with young people from secondary schools in north Dublin. The theme of these workshops is user innovation in the use of technology within the classroom.

QuID 2024 Call: Transitioning AI from a Threat to a Tool: Empowering and Supporting a 21st Century University

The advent of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now a reality that higher education institutions cannot afford to ignore.

Aligned with the new DCU Strategy '**Transformation for an Unscripted Future**', this year's QuID theme provides an opportunity for DCU staff to leverage AI as a powerful tool capable of supporting and enhancing our teaching, learning, research, service and support activities.

Colleagues from all areas, professions and grades are invited to submit AI-focused proposals that explore creative and innovative ways to integrate AI effectively and ethically across **all facets of the University's activities**.

- Support and encouraging early adopters – identified in earlier AI staff survey

- Received 19 applications and we funded 10 projects

- Wide-ranging, ambitious and strategically aligned

- Inaugural showcase event – build momentum and share learnings

" *It was very **useful** having themed funding as not only did we learn from our own project but picked up useful pointers from other projects funded at the same time.*

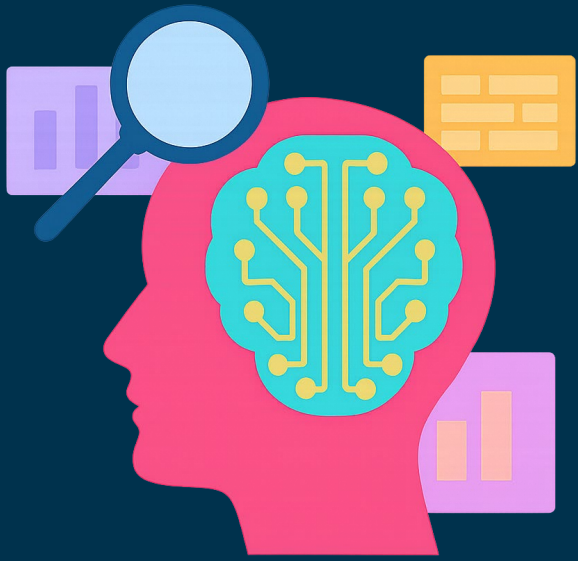# Transitioning AI from a Threat to a Tool…. Some funded projects

That's exactly what I was looking for! Using AI to get users to the website information they want.

- Development of a chatbot to facilitate 24/7 IT support.

- Funded a license the Microsoft Copilot Studio Platform to build the chatbot.

- The project has kick started a huge interest in the area.

- Currently 3 live chatbots on dcu.ie with several more to go live over coming months.

- Not only was the project useful it providing a technical platform, it provided a pathway to gain hands on experience with the technology, to test its strengths and weaknesses, and build good business and data management processes.

"This couldn't have been done without the original funding that both allowed for institutional expertise to be developed while also promoting what could be done throughout the organisation, thereby driving demand for more development."

> *"Guidance documents prepared and disseminated with QUiD Funding have contributed to greater transparency about the use of AI in research projects that come to the DCU Research Ethics Committee."*

Supporting DCU researchers to integrate AI ethically into their research activity

- Support researchers in integrating AI ethically into their work

- Upskill REC members and Faculty Advocates

- Response to growing queries and increasing requirements from funding agencies

- Formation of an AI working group

- Development of guidance documents

- Faculty-level focus groups and a "Train the Trainer" workshop

- Impact beyond DCU: presented at the EARMA Ethics and Research Integrity Officers Network in Barcelona and the National Research Integrity Forum's Community of Practice

- Key outcomes included the publication of DCU guidance on AI in research, enhanced awareness and expertise among ethics reviewers
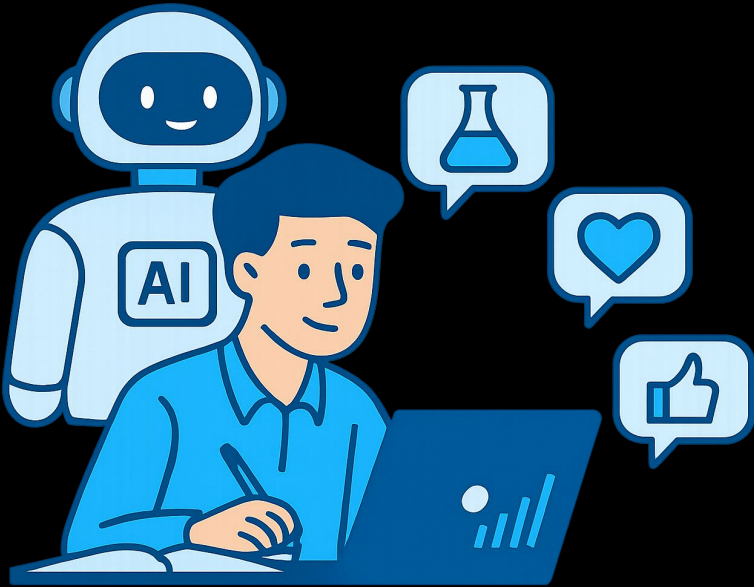
Loop-ing in genAI

- Secure integration between DCU's Moodle VLE and OpenAI's ChatGPT agent

- Pilot the creation of Moodle quiz questions and feedback; supported lecturers to critique and refine generated content and evaluate their experience.

- Supported by DCU to explore potential of GenAI in a safe and secure manner.

- TEU presented the project at the Digital Education Conference in SETU Waterford in 2024, and at a MoodleMunch international webinar in 2025.

- This was the first foray into leveraging genAI content generation

- Positive experience has now widened into a further pilot: text and image generation in various areas of Moodle.

- Spurred the TEU to continue researching VLE-based AI tools

"QuID funding was essential to this project. Funding was utilised to pay for a security review of the third-party plugin by our Moodle hosting provider, to pay for the installation, and to pay for the subscription to OpenAI's API which powered the plugin and connected Moodle and ChatGPT securely."

"The QuID funded project has paved the way for adoption for this application of AI within the school."

The Use of Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Research Communication and Public Engagement: A Feasibility Study

- Dissemination of research and general science communication has become increasingly important

- Difficult and time consuming to produce high quality content

- Can AI software be used to streamline and automate this process

- AI powered software produced video-based summaries - compared performance to manually produced content.

- Reduced the time significantly and resulted in similar engagement and performance on social media.

- Laid foundations for a new research dissemination structure within the school

- Currently developing and refining a fully-automated dissemination pipeline.

- Researchers upload manuscript to pipeline which will create a written summary (for the website) and a video summary (for social media).

Key Learnings from QuID
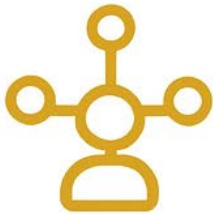
Strong engagement

Beyond compliance

Strategic alignment

Small funding, big change

Shared learning

Safe space for innovation

Collective leadership in action

DCU
Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University