

Expecting student engagement to happen of its own accord has been described as “magical thinking.”
 Chang, Chang And Ledesma 2005



CIT CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
 INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA CHORCAÍ

AnSEO
 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

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OUR STUDENTS MATTER, EVERY STUDENT COUNTS

Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) has a long and hard-earned reputation for being student centric. Our students matter and every student counts. CIT is committed to improving student engagement and recognises the transformative potential of strong student-faculty partnership in pursuit of this goal.

CIT is a leading higher education institution based in Cork City offering a wide range of flexible full-time and part-time higher education courses, at all levels up to and including PhD, in art & design, business, engineering, humanities, music, maritime studies, and science & information technology.

12,000 REGISTERED STUDENTS

1,425 STAFF MEMBERS

4 CONSTITUENT CAMPUSES

CIT currently has in the region of 12,000 registered students with approximately 2,300 new entries year on year. CIT has 1,425 staff members of which 824 are academic staff.

CIT was awarded the Sunday Times Institute of Technology of the Year in 2007, 2010 and 2016.



AnSEO TEAM

Given the size and complexity of CIT, the AnSEO team, as a key priority and strategy, works very deliberately to build strong working relationships, through engagement and communications, with staff and students in all academic departments, central student services and CIT Students Union across the 4 campuses - forming and supporting a wide variety of project working teams on an as need basis. Collaborations and on the ground student engagement activities are supported by a very strong communications campaign targeting students and staff through various online and offline platforms.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

visit: studentengagement.cit.ie



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Good Start sparq at CIT

Academic Learning Centre

PALS

Academic Success Coaching

Transitions to CIT

Strong collaborative student engagement and communication projects currently in place.

GOOD START STUDENT INDUCTION PROGRAMME

studentengagement.cit.ie/goodstart



Semester 1: a first 6 weeks themed programme of activities and communications targeting new incoming first year students, making transition to CIT easier and very welcoming. Semester 2: Good Start S2, is a week of reassuring information campaigns and activities easing the return to CIT for students after Christmas break, coinciding with release of Semester 1 examination results. Every year a student team of Good Start Ambassadors are hired to work on the roll out of Good Start induction programme across all four campuses.



JUST ASK! INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS



Pop-up colourful and interactive help desks staffed by trained student ambassadors, seminars, workshops and complementary social media campaigns on a variety of topics, on a timely basis. Eg Getting started? Just Ask!, maps, directions and 'No such thing as a silly question' ; Just Ask! about IT (in collaboration with IT Services), getting started on Blackboard, myCIT email, etc; Just Ask! about Library (in collaboration with library team); Just Ask! about study; Just Ask! about Exams (in collaboration with Examinations Office).

ACADEMIC SUCCESS COACHING

studentengagement.cit.ie/asc



Student Engagement Office Academic Success Coaches work directly with Class Co-ordinators and their allocated student groups to identify and support students who may be unsure/struggling with course choice and / or academic challenges. Group work/one to one/ supported by strong social media messaging campaign. A strengthening network of working relationships directly with Heads of Department, Class Co-ordinators and students in their class groups, enabling year on year development of more student centric engagement and communications activities.

ACADEMIC LEARNING CENTRE (ALC)

studentengagement.cit.ie/alc



The ALC provides free academic support to students in challenging subject areas including Maths, Mechanics, Physics, Programming, Economics. ALC also runs information campaigns and awareness raising activities directly connecting to students, encouraging them to use ALC services and to seek assistance if struggling academically.

SPARQ AT CIT: STUDENT PARTNERSHIP IN QUALITY

studentengagement.cit.ie/sparq



Student Partnership in Quality at CIT is our NStEP (National Student Engagement Programme) project and is focused on enhancing student/staff interaction and communication to better enable targeted quality enhancements that reflect need. Work includes: Capacity building with staff and students, Student representative training and communications skills development, Institutional Analysis to identify what is working/ needs improvement in the student engagement/communications and partnership space and facilitated, purposeful discussions and consultations between teaching teams and student groups. sparq at CIT connects directly with CIT Students' Union and over 250 Class Reps CIT wide annually.



“Our findings suggest that staff do matter. The educational context created by staff behaviours and attitudes has a dramatic effect on student learning and engagement.” UMBACH AND WAWRZYNSKI, 2005

GET CONNECTED! ICE-BREAKER EVENTS



Trained Good Start and PALS leaders available to work with academic departments in first weeks of Semester 1 to run fun, social induction/icebreaking events with new First Year class groups and their teaching teams. Improves communications and relationships, increases feeling of belonging and engagement.



TRANSITIONS TO CIT PROJECTS



<http://studentengagement.cit.ie/funding/transitions>

Academic Departments are invited to apply for small amounts of seed funding to develop and deliver activities to enhance student engagement and communications. Eg; Enhanced First Year information campaigns focused on the student's home department and course...the inside track, Dept staff/student meet and greet breakfasts, Staff/student team building events and outings.

PALS: PEER ASSISTED LEARNING AND SUPPORT



studentengagement.cit.ie/pals

Later year students are trained to lead study sessions and /or provide social support/ mentoring to earlier year students, creating strong network of engaged students working to enhance newer student experience. Also provides a strong communications web from Student Engagement Office to PALS leader to mentees.



For more information contact:

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RECOGNITION

In 2015/16 CIT's effort and investment of resources to enhance student engagement and communications gained attention from a variety of national and international expert sources including:

- 2017 - CIT Student Engagement Office winner of The Irish Education Awards - Student Engagement and Communications Award <https://www.educationawards.ie/shortlist>
- 2016 - CIT recognised as an exemplar for student engagement by HEA <http://www.heai.ie/news/working-group-student-engagement>
- 2016 - CIT selected as one of 5 HE institutes for participation in the newly launched NStEP (National Student Engagement Programme) by QQI/HEA/USI <http://usi.ie/nstep/>
- 2016 - CIT shortlisted to semi-finalists of 85 nominations received by The National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina, in annual international search for Outstanding First Year Champions http://www.sc.edu/fye/annual/FYE16_AnnualProgram.pdf



STRATEGY

AnSEO focus & stand out feature: Consultation, Collaboration, Action.
Building strong working relationships across CIT, extending reach and impact for students, networking nationally and internationally to inform our practice.

The AnSEO team focuses on building relationship and trust as foundation stones for engagement and communications. We take time and work hard to listen, respond and support positive change. We are purposeful in networking and influencing. Human interaction speaks volumes in the digital age and making real time to meet with, listen and consult students and staff face to face is essential. There is no magical thinking here.

TESTIMONIALS FROM STUDENTS

Paddy O'Driscoll, Analytical Chemistry Student, Good Start Ambassador

"Becoming a Good Start Ambassador is an opportunity for an individual to become a 'catalyst of change'. It's so easy to just do the 'college life', to just attend college every day and go home. But it's so important during your time in college to avail of every opportunity available to you, and Good Start has been one of the biggest opportunities I've had in my college life to date."

PALS Study Leader of Biomedical Student Group, CIT Student

"Throughout the duration of the year I was involved as a PALS Study Leader it has benefitted my skills range"

CIT Student who attended Academic Success Coaching

"Having met with an Academic Success Coach, I was much more organised with my day-to-day tasks. I learned how to create and achieve long and short term goals. Overall I believe this service is a big part of my successes here in CIT."

Stephen Desmond, CIT Student, PALS Study Leader of Computing Group

"I wanted to be a PALS Study Leader for many reasons but the main reason is while I was in 1st year I went to a few PALS sessions and the Study Leader helped me get to grips with the software we were using. This made me think that I would love the opportunity to use the knowledge I have in Programming and Networking and help show the new 1st years that the topics are not as terrifying as they think they are."

Rian Treanor, Marine Engineering Student, Good Start Ambassador

"A lot of first year students just want a little advice and reassurance and I have seen how Good Start activities help put students at ease. Working with the AnSEO team has pushed my boundaries and increased my confidence. Good start has not only helped other students settle into college life, but it has helped me grow as a person and improved my skill set, for that I am extremely grateful."

TESTIMONIALS FROM STAFF

Dr. Pio Fenton, Head of Department, Marketing & International Business, CIT
“The Student Engagement Office, AnSEO, at CIT has had a transformative effect on CIT and reflects the best of the Institute’s ethos not just in its goals but in its methods and means. The range and quality of initiative supported by the office has had a direct impact on the outcomes for students in my department. Most strikingly for me however, is the impact their work has had on my own reflective practices as an academic manager – I’ve found myself unable to avoid student-centred thinking in my activities owing to the usefully provocative thought leadership that emanates from AnSEO.

Dr. Jim O Mahony, Senior Lecturer, Department of Biological Sciences, CIT
“The initiatives and programmes which have been implemented by Student Engagement Office have made a very real and significant impact on our students in lots of ways. We are seeing better retention, improved academic performance and a more effective transition to third level for many students, who ordinarily would have limited support outside of college”.

Mr. Gerard O'Donovan, Head of Faculty of Business and Humanities, CIT
“The CIT Student Engagement Office ensures that the student voice is heard in CIT, and through a partnership approach engages both staff and students working together in a respectful, valued and innovative environment that benefits the Institute. The CIT Student Engagement Office facilitates this process in a structured and collegiate way, which is appreciated by both students and staff who have seen the many positive outputs from the engagement.”

Mr. Michael Loftus, Head of Faculty of Science and Engineering, CIT
“CIT’s Student Engagement Office has played a pivotal role in designing, developing and delivering an excellent framework for communication and engagement with CIT’s students. The framework is multidimensional in nature and covers everything from helping incoming students transition smoothly to life in CIT through to the provision of supports and peer mentoring to optimise opportunities for deep learning, progression and academic success. In addition, the Student Engagement Office has played a pivotal role in establishing fora where student-staff partnerships have been established to tackle challenges in a way where joined-up thinking and sharing of responsibilities for achievement of outcomes is the order of the day. ”.

Ms. Catherine Fehily, Head of School, CIT Crawford College of Art and Design, CIT
“The impact of the work of our Student Engagement team on the quality of the conversation between staff and students here in the Crawford College of Art and Design has been tangible. The whole feel of that relationship has been transformed during the past few years, as a result of student engagement initiatives. The atmosphere now is one of cooperation and collaboration, where we (staff and students) work together to ensure the best possible experience for all concerned. The knowledge, skills and enthusiasm of the Student Engagement team have supported me and my colleagues in finding highly effective ways to keep this two-way, open, honest and constructive conversation flowing.”