

TITLE: CO-DESIGNING AN INCLUSIVE AGE FRIENDLY MULTI-CAMPUS UNIVERSITY FOR THE FUTURE

Abstract: Ireland and the south east region are ageing rapidly. It is forecasted that between 2010 and 2060 Ireland will have the largest overall population growth in Europe (Eurostat, 2011). With this growth, there will be a projected 100% rise in the older adult population by 2051 (65 years and over) (CSO, 2018). Within the period of 2016-2031, the Irish Central Statistics Office predicts a significant older adult population increase, and an almost doubling of figures across all regions. In the South East, this equates to an increase over 50,000 older persons. By 2031 the region will have Ireland's highest older dependency ratio (those aged 65 years and over as a percentage of those aged 15--64) at 34.6% (CSO,2013). This demographic shift could lead to significant growth in older cohorts of learners in the south east region of Ireland. Awareness and inclusion of this older cohort over time will be important, ensuring that the emerging Technological University (T.U.) is adapting to learner needs. Working towards becoming an age friendly multi campus university will ensure an inclusive environment for a diversity of learners. This research will use co design methodologies to begin to understand the future needs of older people in relation to the TU. It will be guided by the Age Friendly University (AFU) principles with an emphasis on:

- Encouraging the participation of older adults in all the core activities of the university, including educational and research programmes.
- Enhancing access for older adults to the university's range of health and wellness programmes and arts and cultural activities.
- The promotion of intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages. (adapted from DCU Age Friendly Network, 2020)

In 2019, Health Impact and Demographic Change has been written into Institutional research policy as a core research area (Institute of Technology Carlow, 2019). The information and insight created within this research can be used in the future development of programmes, the campus, University strategy, and the potential membership of the International Age Friendly University network. It will seek to understand intergenerational experiences to create a positive environment for both younger and older age groups contributing to an inclusive, healthy and active campus culture.

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