



Opening Statement: Dr Deirdre Lillis

President of Technological University Dublin

**The Joint Committee on Further and Higher Education, Research,
Innovation and Science**

Wednesday, 7 October 2026

(Check against delivery)

A Chathaoirligh, a Theachtaí Dála agus a Sheanadóirí, go raibh maith
agaibh

TU Dublin is committed to career development and supporting students
from all backgrounds to build pathways into employment.

Our university has this city's highest graduate employability rate,
reflecting our commitment to preparing students for work.

Across five campuses, Grangegorman, Tallaght, Blanchardstown,
Aungier Street and Bolton Street, TU Dublin serves over 28,000 students
and 3,500 staff.

For 2026/27, TU Dublin received more CAO programme mentions than any other university, making us Ireland's most applied-to higher education institution.

TU Dublin offers programmes from apprenticeships to PhDs across science, engineering, business, arts and tourism, supporting talent, skills and innovation across Dublin and Ireland through education, research and industry partnerships

Dublin faces a significant shortage of affordable, purpose-built student accommodation. TU Dublin currently has no on-campus accommodation for students.

Many students face lengthy commutes: TU Dublin surveys show 46% travel over 60 minutes and 13% over 90 minutes. Alongside increasing accommodation, we would like to see more emphasis on a national student commuting strategy, bringing together the Departments of Transport and Further and Higher Education with relevant authorities to improve direct, sustainable transport to publicly funded higher-education institutions.

Despite the challenges, TU Dublin's diverse student community represents all 32 counties and 138 nationalities.

We welcomed Minister Lawless's publication of the Student Accommodation Strategy 2026–2035 on 24 March 2026, which supports HEIs in increasing Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) capacity by enabling private development on or near campus through nomination agreements, licensed sites and site servicing.

Digs remain an important and more immediate source of student accommodation. Recent Government measures, including VAT reductions, planning changes and rent control measures, should also help to activate beds that have planning permission but have not proceeded to commencement.

TU Dublin is working closely with DFHERIS, the Higher Education Authority, the National Development Finance Agency and the Grangegorman Development Authority on the roll out of the new Higher Education Institution Student Accommodation Programme (HSAP).

TU Dublin is represented on the HSAP board, which last met on 30 September 2026 to advance plans for an Expression of Interest to the market.

The Expression of Interest will cover potential Phase 1 student accommodation sites at TU Dublin's Grangegorman campus, in collaboration with the GDA, as well as sites for other HEIs in Dublin, Cork and Galway.

Site studies suggest Grangegorman could accommodate 1,200–1,400 student units, with the Expression of Interest findings helping to shape the delivery programme.

TU Dublin is also working with the Land Development Agency on a potential residential development, including student accommodation, on the edge of the Tallaght campus. This would significantly enhance student life on the Tallaght campus.

Good student accommodation gives students the stability, community and support to succeed. Without affordable options, some face three- or four-hour daily commutes that can undermine their wellbeing and college experience.

Practice-based learning is central to TU Dublin, with placements, projects and employer partnerships giving students valuable workplace experience. Accessible accommodation helps ensure they can fully participate and that these opportunities are not lost.

TU Dublin trains the electricians, engineers, apprentices and tradespeople Ireland needs to grow its economy and deliver vital infrastructure. Ensuring they can access these programmes, including

through affordable accommodation, supports both our economy and social inclusion.

On-campus accommodation would bring greater life and community to our campuses beyond teaching hours. We remain open to flexible models that could also accommodate enterprise or key workers outside term time.

Affordability must remain at the heart of investment. TU Dublin's mission is to provide accessible education, including for first-generation students and those from disadvantaged communities. Accommodation must also be matched by affordable transport and other essential services.

Every student should have the opportunity to thrive in college, whatever their circumstances. Affordable student accommodation is a key part of that experience and, in turn, supports Ireland's wider social and economic development.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

ENDS.