



MTU Ready — Arrival Toolkit for First-Year Students (Munster Technological University)

Key Features

1. Was the initiative established specifically to promote progression and retention and/or to address non-progression rates?

Yes.

2. Please state the institutional commitments or national priorities with which this initiative is aligned — for example, an institutional policy or strategic plan, an indicator in the institution's Performance Agreement under the System Performance Framework, and/or the National Access Plan?

MTU's strategic plan includes several learner, education, and experience objectives. These include: (1) MTU will empower learners to make informed choices throughout their education journeys; and (2) MTU will provide a digital learning experience to increase flexibility, creating new learning opportunities, and enrich the learning experience of all students. MTU Ready is directly aligned with both strategic priorities. Please see: <https://www.mtu.ie/media/mtu-website/courses/documents/MTU-Strategic-Plan.pdf>.

3. Title of lead or section responsible for the initiative/measure

Student Engagement Officers – AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office

4. Focus

- First-year students
- New entrants
- Early intervention initiative
- Transition focus
- Institution-wide initiative

5. Theme

- First-year experience

Overview of Initiative

6. Briefly describe the initiative, with reference to

- Why, and when introduced
- Overview of activities/intervention
- Success to date & next steps.

MTU Ready is an online arrival toolkit that incoming first-year students access before starting university. Hosted on the Potential.ly Ltd platform (London-based specialists in digital education), the arrival toolkit invites students to reflect on their preparedness and needs. Upon completion, they receive a personalised report that includes: (A) a visual summary of their responses; (B) highlighted strengths and potential challenges; and (C) tailored recommendations for MTU support and services. The toolkit explores key areas like student academic preparedness and study skills, social and community integration, transition and adaptation, as well as time management and personal concerns. It's not just a questionnaire — it's an early connection point between students and the MTU community.

The following comprises an initial snapshot of our headline findings in September/October 2025:

- 1517 respondents
- 3390 population size
- 44% response rate
- 2.6% margin of error
- 95% confidence level

Aims and Objectives

7. Aim of the initiative

MTU Ready aims to help incoming students reflect, plan, and feel seen before they start studying at MTU. The programme aims to encourage early engagement with support, a culture where seeking help is normal, greater retention, and a stronger first-year experience.

8. Objective 1

To encourage early engagement.

Actions

Students who complete the 10-question arrival check-in receive a personalised report with a summary of their strengths, and a list of suggested actions with linked support to address any challenges or concerns they have.

Expected Outcome

MTU Ready has driven academic staff to prioritise student engagement, evidenced by a 27% increase in AnSEO-facilitated classroom information and engagement sessions across departments during the Good Start weeks (first four weeks of term) in 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. A further 300 first-year students (31% increase compared to 2024) were introduced to the academic learning centre and mentoring support through staff-requested classroom sessions in the first four weeks of September 2025.

9. Objective 2

To promote a culture where seeking help is normal.

Actions

We hosted learning festivals in our new student engagement space at MTU and hosted a World Café-style series of focus groups. The aim of this was to enhance belonging and receive feedback on how we could best enhance student engagement and success. This was also intended as a means of getting follow-up feedback concerning MTU Ready. In Semester 2, we conducted focus groups with students who completed MTU Ready to gather in-depth narratives addressing the question: Whether, and in what way, MTU Ready contributed to a normalisation of help-seeking behaviour, and an improved sense of well-being and belonging across our learning community. In general, MTU Ready was viewed as helpful in bridging the gap between second and third level,

and in promoting help-seeking behaviour.

Expected Outcome

Our learning festival was well attended (60 participants across two days), and we received very positive feedback from student participants. Students felt that MTU Ready was helpful in enabling them to transition by highlighting their strengths and pointing them to support where needed, and students also felt having a dedicated student engagement space contributed to feelings of belonging.

10. Objective 3

To improve retention rates and strengthen first-year experience.

Actions

Follow-up on available data to ascertain as far as possible the impact of MTU Ready on first-year experience and retention rates. To ascertain this, we will look at progression by NFQ level and faculty discipline.

Expected Outcome

We anticipate that MTU Ready will have a positive impact on improving retention rates and make a qualitative positive difference to the first-year transition and progression experience. Ultimately, we believe MTU Ready will make a measurable impact in terms of student success.

Resourcing

11. How is the initiative resourced?

Technological Sector Advancement Fund:

The Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF) is a €50 million government initiative and managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). TSAF aims to support quality, excellence, and capacity building across technological universities. AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office received part of this funding to develop a toolkit for incoming students to enhance their first-year experience.

Monitoring & Oversight

12. How is the initiative monitored — is there a reporting structure in place or a committee where there is a monitoring of and reporting on progress and the achievement of objectives (e.g. academic council, university executive team)?

MTU Ready is administered via our 10-item arrival check-in on our interactive platform. By analysing data, facilitating second-semester focus groups, running surveys, and holding regular team review meetings, we effectively oversee and monitor the project. Annually, MTU submits a detailed HEA report on TSAF-supported activity, shared with relevant University Executives. For 2025/26, we monitored engagement early via the arrival toolkit and class visits, gathered qualitative feedback in semester 2, and will track retention to assess ongoing impact into 2026/27.

Data & Evidence of Impact

13. How do you know that the initiative is working as planned, i.e.
- Are data gathered (ongoing monitoring and evaluation of achievement of objectives)?
 - Have the objectives been achieved? What data and evidence are there to support this?

MTU Ready achieved a 44% response rate, capturing students' subject choice preferences and motivations. Seventy-five percent of students were intrinsically motivated to study, and they were also influenced by open days, social connections, and guidance counsellors. This suggests the greatest impact comes from fostering connection and peer engagement early, particularly for commuting students and those not in university accommodation.

14. Has impact been established, and how? If not at present, how do you plan to gather data and evidence to establish impact?

Impact has been established for objective one. In total, 44% of incoming students completed the

arrival check-in and received personalised reports. We have seen an increase in teacher-requested class visits. We have also seen increases in attendance at the Academic Learning Centre and in requests for support around student groupwork. Objectives two and three require further evaluation.

Future Plans

15. How do you intend to further develop or expand the initiative?

As mentioned previously, we are in the process of communicating results to students and other MTU stakeholders as part of our social media campaign and dissemination strategy. We aim to engage with the Potential.ly platform (our technology partners) to standardise Likert coding and data format. We will also build a repeatable reporting model which will align data usage with strategic goals for transition, belonging, and success. We aim to develop more follow-up qualitative questionnaires to check in on student experiences and progress, and to develop rich descriptive stories to complement our quantitative data and ultimately assess the impact of MTU Ready on our students. Finally, we aim to extend this type of support across the student lifecycle through our proposed MTU SET (second year) and MTU GO (third and final year) arrival toolkits.

Additional Information

16. Additional information including relevant URLs

- [MTU Student Engagement — MTU Ready Toolkit](#)
- <https://youtu.be/ozudpovbUbk?si=28ag7SkUssChDJfD>
- [MTU Student Engagement — MTU Ready Resources for Lecturers](#)

