Technological University of the Shannon

Connect & Engage Programme

Overview of Initiative

The Connect & Engage Programme is a structured, seven-week, integrated First Year Induction initiative designed to support new and progressing students as they transition into or continue in higher education across TUS's seven campuses. Introduced following TU designation in 2021, the programme was developed to address challenges faced by first-year and returning students, difficulties in transitioning to university life, and the need for dual-level engagement with both academic and central support services.

The programme provides a digital one-stop-shop student pre-arrival platform, The TUS Starter Pack, as well as curated events, workshops, in-person support, digital engagement strategies, and a peer-to-peer Student Leader Programme. The TUS Starter Pack has been successful in enabling students navigate business processes and access supports and resources in a user-friendly format. Similarly, the scaling of First Year On-Campus In-Person Induction across all seven campuses has been a critical success factor. The programme is reviewed annually for continuous improvement and utilises a range of curated digital innovations including video, apps, Interactive Way Finding, Learner Success Toolkit and social media (Instagram, TikTok).

Monitoring & Oversight

The programme is coordinated through Student Support Services within the office of the VP for Student Education and Experience. Monitoring involves yearly review and continuous ongoing development using a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, student and staff feedback, and analysis of engagement metrics.

Outputs are shared internally through various channels, including Academic Council and Academic Council Sub-Committee for Student Experience and Access, VP and Deans Council, TUS Annual Quality Review, and externally in relevant HEA reports.

Additional Information

- TUS Connect and Engage 2025 Video Highlights
- TUS Student Induction Programmes
- TUS Starter Pack; TUS Learner Success Toolkit
- TUS Midlands – Student Resource Centre Linktree
- TUS Midwest – Student Support Services Linktree

Key Features

- Transition focus
- Student wellbeing, experience, & success focus
- All students

Aims & Objectives

Aim: To enhance student engagement, well-being, and retention by providing a structured, supportive, and interactive start to the academic year, ensuring students feel connected, informed, and empowered as they engage in their university journey.

Objective 1: To facilitate a smooth transition into university life for new and returning students.

Objective 2: To provide access to personal and academic support and to prevent early-stage disengagement in support of student success and progression.

Data & Evidence of Impact

In 2025, there was 85% average attendance at Welcome Week On-Campus Induction. Admissions teams also noted a reduction in student/family queries due to streamlined communication and student services teams noted increased engagement with supports e.g. 27% increase in Counselling compared to previous year.

TUS Starter Pack survey: 94% would not change anything, and 82% were 'Very' or 'Extremely Happy', with an average rating of 4.26 out of 5.

The project has positively impacted retention, with the non-progression rate improving from 21% (2021 intake) to 19% (2022 intake), and further to 16% (2023 intake). Digital social connection data showed that 77% of students made friendships outside their course pre-arrival and we now have over 5,000 followers on Instagram in 2025.