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Promoting graduate employability through the provision of co-curricular and extra-curricular supports to enable students to develop key skills sought by employers in the contemporary workplace

Submission date
27/11/2020

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
08/12/2020

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
04/01/2021

Condition category
Other

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims:
Transform-EDU is a three-year project. Employers are increasingly seeking graduates with a rounded skill set that includes both relevant technical knowledge and a broad range of social and emotional skills. The contemporary graduate is expected to join multi-professional teams and may work across a number of time zones and with a diverse range of clients and co-workers. Therefore, skills such as adaptability, stress management and having a positive outlook are highly valued, yet employers report such skills are often lacking amongst new entrants. Therefore, this project proposes to develop and test an innovative approach to learning, where elements of structured programmes and extra-curricular events are purposefully integrated to create a rich learning environment. The primary goal of this study is to ensure that graduates possess the specific skills that are required in the modern workplace, which will lead to increased levels of graduate employability.

Who can participate:
Students of Technological University Dublin

What does the study involve:
Within the Transform-EDU project, one part involves developing training modules and workshops that will enable students to enhance their social and emotional competencies. Therefore graduate will develop skills associated with employability and career success in their discipline. These will be made available to students throughout their programmes of study. Modules designated for Year 1 of study will focus on promoting self-awareness, intercultural awareness, and stress management. In Year 2 of study, learners will be offered group-based programme/discipline-specific emotional intelligence coaching workshops. In the final year of study, students will be offered a work-readiness module, with a practical focus to enable them to demonstrate mastery of key skills for employment. Learning events will include employer–

delivered seminars and workshops. Learners will also receive coaching in CV and interview preparation, and mock competency-based interviews with employers.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?:
The possible benefits of participating are that students may develop key skills associated with employability and thus boost their chances of employment after they graduate. Participants may also develop skills that will improve their ability to manage stress and their level of wellbeing. It is also possible that improved stress management and wellbeing may in turn lead to improved academic grades.

Possible risks include increased anxiety as a consequence of focusing on personal issues that may surface during workshops. College counsellors are aware that this study will be taking place and will be available should students need to speak to them.

Where is the study run from?:
The Research Centre For Psychology, Education And Emotional Intelligence (PEEI) at on the Blanchardstown Campus of Technological University Dublin (Ireland)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?:
From February 2020 to August 2021

Who is funding the study?:
The Higher Education Authority Of Ireland (HEA) (Ireland)

Who is the main contact?:
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Contact information

Type(s)
Public

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
The Transformative Student-centred Learning Record

Acronym
Transform-EDU

Study objectives
1. Study one: the provision of mindfulness coaching to first-year university students will lead, on average, to improved levels of mindfulness, and will lead, on average, to increased grade point averages.
2. Study two: the provision of emotional intelligence coaching to second-year university students will lead, on average, to improved levels of emotional intelligence, and will lead, on average, to increased grade point averages.
3. Study three: Irish employers will consider, on average, that TU Dublin final-year students have high levels of work-related social and emotional skills, and state that they are more likely to hire TU Dublin graduates than students graduating from other third-level institutions, based on the level of social and emotional skills they demonstrate at mock interviews. The provision of employability coaching to final year TU Dublin University students will lead, on average, to increased grade point averages.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 01/09/2020, Technological University Dublin Blanchardstown Campus Ethics Committee (Blanchardstown Road North, D15 YV78, Republic Of Ireland; +353-1-8851068; pat.oconnor@tudublin.ie)

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design
Multicenter interventional cross-sectional quasi-experimental design

Study type(s)
Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Promotion of social and emotional skills development as a means of enhancing graduate employability

Interventions
The primary goal of this study is to ensure that graduates possess the specific social and emotional skills that are required in the modern workplace, which will lead to increased levels of graduate employability.

Training modules and workshops will be made available to students throughout their programmes of study. Each training module will be five weeks in duration and consist of a one hour workshop, once per week. The module designated for Year 1 of study will focus on promoting self-awareness, intercultural awareness, and stress management. In Year 2 of study, learners will be offered group-based programme/discipline-specific Emotional intelligence (EI) coaching workshops. In the final year of study, students will be offered a work-readiness module, with a practical focus to enable them to demonstrate mastery of key skills for employment. Participation in all workshops will be on a voluntary basis.

First year students, who participate in mindfulness workshops, will have their levels of mindfulness and stress measured both pre and post attendance at the mindfulness workshops by the Brief Resilience Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale. Students who attend second year modules for group EI coaching will have their EI assessed prior to engagement and once again after they have completed any coaching modules they participate in and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) will be employed for this purpose.

With respect to employability, final year students will be invited to attend workshops that will focus on the development of key social and emotional skills related to the work environment such as teamworking and effective communication. Students will then be invited to mock competency-based interviews that will be delivered by key employers in their chosen area of study. Employability will be assessed by asking employers who deliver interviews to rate students ‘as if’ they were applying for positions in their firms. Focus groups will take place with students from all years to assess their experiences of attending the coaching sessions. For all participants, students GPA’s will also be tracked to see if participation in coaching has an impact on academic attainment (it should be noted that this is not a primary aim of the study but may form the basis for a secondary, smaller study arising from this one).

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
1. Mindfulness measured using the Brief Resilience Scale at baseline and 6 weeks
2. Stress measured using the Perceived Stress Scale at baseline and 6 weeks
3. Emotional intelligence measured using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

(TEIQue) at baseline and 6 weeks
4. Employability measured by employers who will rate the social and emotional skills that students display at mock interviews and indicate whether they would employ them or not were the interviews for actual positions at their firms at 6 weeks

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Academic achievement measured using grade point averages (GPA) collected for participating students and compared to the average GPA for their student cohort at the end of each academic year

Completion date
31/08/2021

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Registered student at Technological University Dublin
1.1. Study one: first year students of Technological University Dublin
1.2. Study two: second year students of Technological University Dublin
1.3. Study three: final year students of Technological University Dublin

Participant type(s)
Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
01/11/2020

Date of final enrolment
01/03/2021

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Ireland

Study participating centre

Technological University Dublin
Blanchardstown Road North
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Study participating centre
Technological University Dublin
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Study participating centre
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Sponsor information

Organisation
Technological University Dublin

ROR
https://ror.org/04t0qbt32

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
Higher Education Authority

Alternative Name(s)
Higher Education Authority, Government of Ireland, Irish Higher Education Authority, An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas, HEA

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
Ireland

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study during this study will be included in the subsequent results publication.

IPD sharing plan summary
Other

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Participant information sheet			04/01/2021	No	Yes
Participant information sheet			04/01/2021	No	Yes