



## HEINNOVATE USER EXPERIENCE CASE STUDY

### DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (DkIT), IRELAND

#### Increasing Institutional Engagement with the *HEInnovate* Tool

##### **Background**

Established in 1970, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has a successful track record of delivering entrepreneurship education to students and supporting local entrepreneurs. The Institute has 5,000 students, offers a range of full and part-time programmes at under and postgraduate level across its four Schools (Business & Humanities; Health & Science; Informatics & Creative Arts; Engineering), and has a state of the art, on-campus Incubation Centre (Regional Development Centre). DkIT Lecturers have won international awards for their entrepreneurship teaching, assessment and research. Accordingly, DkIT was recognised as a good practice example in the OECD Country Report on Supporting Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Higher Education in Ireland (2017).

##### **Details**

The first time DkIT implemented the *HEInnovate* tool, the focus was on the School of Business and Humanities, with lecturers invited to complete the assessment on-line. Follow up e-mail reminders were sent after one week. Respondents reported that the questionnaire was too long; the themes/dimensions were unfamiliar to them or seemed irrelevant, and that the tool was not 'user friendly'. Some questioned its objectives, and others expressed concerns over respondent anonymity. The exercise proved unsuccessful, yielding a very low response rate (30%).

The second time DkIT implemented the *HEInnovate tool*, the following changes were made:

- Only two dimensions of the tool were included - one where it was felt that DkIT performed well (*Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning*), and one where it was felt DkIT could improve (*Measuring the Impact*). This reduced the number of questions to eleven so that the survey only took 5 minutes;
- A pilot was conducted, and some minor changes were made as a result;
- The Head of the School of Business & Humanities e-mailed staff to explain the objective of the assessment: To explore the extent to which DkIT is perceived as an *entrepreneurial Institution* by its stakeholders;
- Staff were asked to confirm their completion of the assessment, and non-respondents were followed-up;
- Staff were offered an incentive to complete the assessment (an opportunity to win a bottle of champagne).

##### **Results**

- The response rate improved significantly (from 30% to 87%);
- Awareness of the importance of entrepreneurial teaching and learning increased amongst academic staff;
- DkIT learned that many of their Entrepreneurship lecturers had practical entrepreneurship experience;
- Overall, respondents gave a higher score within the 'Entrepreneurial Teaching & Learning' dimension;
- Findings were collated but not acted upon at the Senior Management level.

##### **Key Takeaways**

Communication is key. When a HEI decides to implement the *HEInnovate* tool and invite participants to take the survey, it is important to explain why and outline objectives. 'Who' administers the survey is also important. Utilisation of survey findings requires the engagement and support of Senior Management from the outset.