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Putting Ideas Into Practice- the New Greenway Hub.

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THE IRISH TIMES



ENTREPRENEURSHIP &
EDUCATION



Prof Brian Norton, President, [Dublin Institute of Technology](#)

Putting ideas into practice

The new Greenway Hub at [Dublin Institute of Technology](#) is located at the heart of the new campus with innovation as its lifeblood.

Locating the Greenway Hub – a new building focused on research and innovation and incorporating incubation space for start-ups – at the geographic centre of its Grangegorman campus is a clear indication of the importance of entrepreneurship to [Dublin Institute of Technology \(DIT\)](#).

"Entrepreneurship is front and centre at [DIT](#)," says the institute's president, Prof Brian Norton. "We're an institution that is inherently linked to industry – everything from manufacturing to the creative sector – and we are very much focused on practice-led education leading people into entrepreneurship."

Recently completed and set to be occupied in February, the Greenway Hub has been funded through PRTL and Enterprise Ireland, with matching funding from [DIT](#). It is intended to be the lifeblood of research and innovation on the new campus. As well as housing the [DIT](#) Hothouse incubation facility and commercialisation team, it will be home to 90 PhD students and 40 staff researchers of the Environment, Sustainability and Health Institute (ESHI). Students will have access to a large central lab which is adjacent to state of the art facilities for areas of research strength in vision sciences, assistive technology, food chemistry, microbiology, solar energy, etc.

"Usually this kind of building is on the edge of the campus because that's how universities develop," says Norton. "Because we have moved to a new campus we had the opportunity to put it smack in

the middle to be emblematic of the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship to the institution."

But the physical location alone will not achieve that, he says. "We're obviously going to have a lot of activities that begin to focus the students on the idea that entrepreneurship and creating your own business is equally legitimate as going to work for somebody."

"It's very much part of the culture of the organisation: entrepreneurs being in the middle of the campus rather than at the edge. It's physically, emotionally and in terms of our educational mission, intrinsically linked to what we're about."

[DIT](#) Hothouse is the innovation and technology transfer office responsible for commercialising intellectual property arising from research at the institution. According to Norton, since being set up in 2007, it has consistently outperformed other Irish university technology transfer offices, completing up to 20pc of the annual commercial technology transfer licences in Ireland. And, through its Enterprise Ireland-funded incubation programmes, it has helped create nearly 200 sustainable businesses that have attracted €115m in equity investment.

"We have a policy that unless there's another agreement in place, intellectual property belongs to colleagues and students as of right," says Norton. "It's very much encouraging the identification and disclosure and protection of intellectual property and we have

one of the highest licensing rates in Ireland as a result. And, 1,400 people are currently working in our spin outs."

The focus on entrepreneurship varies from programme to programme, but all are practice-based, research-informed and developed with input from industry partners. "They're all based on the idea of going into practice, into the professions, whether as an employee or an employer or setting up their own business," explains Norton. "They're very practically oriented but also very informed by context and research. You often get academic and research, but practice-based and research is quite an interesting combination."

To further its ties with industry and its focus on innovation, [DIT](#) is planning a collaborative, interdisciplinary, multi-storey research and science park at the entrance to the campus at Broadstone. The complex, which

is expected to be completed and occupied by 2019.

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Grangegorman campus