The DIT Examiner: the Newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union May, 1997

DIT: Students' Union

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DIT students — they’re hot in the bed department, they’re not afraid of drugs, and they’re well aware of what’s happening on the political front.

That’s according to the recent Student Attitudes Survey carried out by DITSU across all six DIT colleges.

The results of the opinion poll/survey have presented the DIT Students’ Union with some invaluable statistics concerning students’ views, preferences and habits.

Sex and drugs issues provided some startling facts about public perception and the realities. 73% of those polled have had sex, with only 18% still virgins. 9% did not give an answer.

This, seemingly high, percentage of young people engaging in sexual relations might arouse fears about health and safe sex, but the figures relating to protected sex are encouraging.

83% answered that they use condoms when having sex. This would indicate that a high level of students are informed about the dangers and risks to their health.

Drug-taking, traditionally a famous student occupation, still ranks high, but one of the most surprising facts lies in the result that more people appear to have indulged in acid consumption than in taking Ecstasy.

Cannabis-smoking ranks highest of all, with everyone who has indulged in illegal drugs having tested the resin at some stage. With two candidates running in the general election on a ‘legalise cannabis’ ticket, it will be interesting to see how much support they will gain.

3.2% of those polled had tried heroin. Obviously, there is some overlap involved with the statistics, where some people will have tried more than one drug.

For more info see pages 4-5
Warbled ramblings in Editorial Seclusion

Big, big sorry to all those expecting to see their photographed images reproduced in the previous edition of D'examiner, the April-May issue. Personally, I blame the parents, but that's not really a sufficient excuse. Having forgotten to include 3D shades with each copy, and/or instructions concerning how to stare 'through' the pictures with your magic eye, thus revealing the secret image hidden therein. I proceeded to hand them out left, right and centre without regard for the consequences. People's feelings were hurt, and a goat or two suffered serious injury.

Again, mea culpa, APOLOGIES, one and all.

As for the fact that the April-May edition was the final edition for the academic year 96-97, technically it was. This particular one is just an addendum to it, its extra, but it isn't superfluous. This edition contains information gathered in the Ditsu Student Attitude Survey regarding DIT students, i.e. all, as our American cousins might say. Specifically, statistics relating to your habits, opinions and practices. It's interesting stuff, you should have a good long gawk at it.

The DIT recently made it into the pages of the country's leading light in magazines, named after birds who rise out of flames, or actually ARE those same flames, or can sometimes rise out of ashes, or occasionally - enough. The Phoenix saw fit to publish details of a junket to the Killiney Court Hotel for 50 members of the DIT School of Languages, where they had loads of grub and stayed overnight to boot. The DIT Examiner would like to announce this sort of behaviour and states quite categorically that it would, without hesitation, take up an offer to join them on their next outing.

This edition is also put together to try and get you all sorted for your exams. Hence, the Appeals Procedure and Regulations section gathered on p3. The DIT Counsellors point out that it's not necessary to stress-equip yourself around exam time - pretty sound advice.

Big FANX to anyone who contributed throughout the year with articles, photographs, ads, letters and suggestions - your assistance is invaluable. Can't pay you, though. Make it through the summer and I'll buy ice-pops for the lot of ye in September. Ari Viderci.

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Ditsu
RUN BY STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS SO GET INVOLVED!
It's Your Students' Union.

Editor: Cearbhall Ó Siocháin
Psychiatric Nurse: Christopher Walker
Printed by Datascope, Enniscorhy Co. Wexford

Clarifications

Should you encounter anything you feel is in need of clarification in this, or any other issue of the DIT Examiner, please contact the editor and any such matters shall then be clarified in the subsequent edition.

Winners of previous Irish Times Crossword competition April-May '97:
1. Dan Burke, Optics 2, Kevin St.
2. Ken Gargan, SE11, Kevin St.
3. Gráinne McCormack, WBS4, Kevin St.
Prizes can be collected from Kevin St. SU offices.
The Exam Appeals Procedure

Each year, the DIT’s Exam Appeals Board receives, on average, 10 appeals from students regarding exam results. These can sometimes be concerned with an upgrading of a result but not always. Occasionally, there is a request to sit a supplemental exam if the usual supplemental options have been exhausted.

There is an appeal procedure that should be followed and it should be available in the exams office in each DIT site. This is not always the case, however, and so we will here outline the procedure as clearly as is possible. This procedure is there to be used if you feel you have a genuine case.

Thomas Duff, the DIT’s Registrar, has pointed out that the Exam Appeals Board, which is independent of individual colleges, cannot change results but can pass onto the exams board information that may not have been available at the time of the exam. This may then result in the exam board reconvening to consider the student’s case.

An appeal may be made by a candidate on one or more of the following grounds where it is claimed that:

a) the examinations regulations of the college have not been properly implemented;

b) the regulations do not adequately cover a candidate’s case;

c) compassionate circumstances which relate to the candidate’s examination situation.

1. The first step is to get an Examination Appeals Form (Form A1). This should be available from the Administrative Section of the relevant college.

2. This form must be completed in block letters on the floor typewriter and lodged with the relevant director within two weeks of the publication of the Provisional Examination Results and accompanied by the appropriate fee (£50). The relevant director must then sign and date the appeal and he will then forward it to the Registrar (Thomas Duff). It must be accompanied by:

A. Information as to whether -

(i) the appellant [student making the appeal] has made efforts to resolve, through the relevant Head of School/Department the difficulty which has given rise to the appeal;

(ii) a recheck has been requested and, if so, state the outcome if processed;

(iii) the Examination Board has been made aware of any special circumstances, including medical, affecting the appellant’s case prior to determination of results

(iv) the students in general and the prospective appellant in particular, have been informed of the appropriate course regulations

Other information which must accompany the appeal is

B. A written evaluation of the case from the relevant director, including comment on the allegations, if any, contained therein.

C. Medical certificates relevant to the case.

D. The appellant’s academic record in previous years and a transcript of his/her current class group’s examination results in respect of which the appeal is being sought.

E. The process by which the appellant may continue his/her studies if the appeal is unsuccessful.

F. Any other relevant information on the case.

Be sure to include any information that may be relevant, and if including any medical certificates, ensure that you list their inclusion on the appeals form in the appropriate section of the form.

Section 10 of the form asks the appellant to ‘please specify the change you seek in your result as a consequence of this appeal’. This section, according to Thomas Duff, was introduced because there have been students who were requesting a further supplemental exam rather than an upgrading of a result. Don’t be worried by the request. State honestly your feeling on the matter and why.

There is space provided on the appeals form (section 8) in which you may present your case in your own words. If you feel there is insufficient space provided on the form, you can continue on separate sheets of paper but make sure you include them with your appeal and indicate clearly their inclusion.

There is a facility for presenting your case to the board, either by yourself or with a willing lecturer/representative of the students’ union. One of these could present the case for you or you could forego this option entirely. It will not prejudice your case.

Hopefully, you will not need recourse to this facility, but if you do, don’t be afraid to make your case.

Thomas Duff also points out that a complete review of the Exams Appeals process and the current Regulations is underway at the moment. It is likely that in the future, disciplinary decisions will, in future, devolve to individual faculty mechanisms in order to improve the system.

EXAM REGULATIONS

1. Candidates are required to attend at least fifteen minutes before the starting time of each examination. Examinations will be held in the main entrance hall of the College.

2. You must produce your Student Identity Card before entry into the examination hall is permitted. External candidates will also be required to produce suitable identification (e.g. Place of work ID or Passport).

3. Candidates are requested to bring only essential items up to the examination room. Any books, notebooks, papers, bags, briefcases etc. which are brought in must be left outside the door at the top or bottom of the examination room away from the examination area. (Candidates may keep handbags on the floor as long as they do not obstruct their examination room when they are examined by the Supervisor).

4. Coats or jackets may not be left on the back of chairs during the course of the examination.

5. Smoking in the College, except in specially designated areas, is now strictly forbidden by law.

6. The Supervisor will attend to any problem which may arise. You may attract his/her attention by raising your hand.

7. Candidates shall, in all matters relating to the examination, adhere to the directions of the Supervisor.

8. You must position your Student Identity Card on your desk where it can be seen by the Supervisor during the course of the examination. No other documents should appear on your desk.

9. Candidates should enter their examination number on the answer book. Candidates’ names should not be given unless specifically requested by the examining body concerned.

10. Only silent, non-programmable pocket type calculators will be permitted. The sharing of calculators will not be permitted and the College will not be responsible for the provision of calculators or batteries in the event of failure.

11. Talking or communication of any kind between candidates is not permitted during the course of an examination.

12. All work should be done on the answer book or other material provided.

13. The use of scrap paper is forbidden.

14. Candidates may not leave during the final hour or within the last fifteen minutes of an examination. Candidates leaving an examination early should do so quietly and avoid disturbance of other candidates.

15. It is pointed out that the Exam Appeals Board, which is independent of individual colleges, cannot change results but can pass onto the exam board information that may not have been available at the time of the exam. This may then result in the exam board reconvening to consider the student’s case.

16. A candidate who in any way uses or attempts to use any unfair means renders himself/herself liable to disqualification. Any such breach will be reported to the College Authority and, where appropriate, the examining body.

17. Offences in connection with degrees, diplomas or certificates or annual examinations or tests conducted by the College are regarded as major offences.

18. Where illness prevents a student from sitting an examination or any part of an examination, a medical certificate must be submitted to the Examination Secretary not later than one week following the first occasion on which the student is absent. Medical certificates received later than this will not normally be accepted.
The DITSU Student Attitudes Survey was conducted by the Union during one week in late April this year. The statistics were worked out by a professional, independent firm on behalf of DITSU. The following is a summary of the survey, containing some of the more important aspects of the study.

### Sex and Sexuality

- **Have you had full sexual intercourse?**
  - Yes: 72%
  - No: 28%

- **How regularly do you have sex?**
  - Daily: 11.2%
  - Weekly: 20.2%
  - Monthly: 15%
  - Rarely: 24.8%

- **How would you describe your sexual orientation?**
  - Heterosexual: 9%
  - Homosexual: 1%
  - Intersexual: 89%

### Alcohol / Drugs

- **Do you drink alcohol?**
  - Yes: 87%
  - No: 13%

- **If the answer to the above is yes, do you drink the following types of alcoholic drinks on a regular basis?**
  - Lager: 68.9%
  - Guinness: 33.7%
  - Spirits: 54.5%
  - Alcoholic Lemonade: 22.8%

- **How many times a week would you drink alcohol?**
  - Once: 21.3%
  - Two or three times: 59.4%
  - More than three times: 16.1%

- **Do you use contraception when having sexual intercourse?**
  - Yes: 70.3%
  - No: 4.3%

- **What forms of contraception do you use?**
  - Pill: 5%
  - Condom: 11%
  - Coil: 3%
  - IUD: 1%
  - Options: 89%

- **Have you ever used / tried illegal drugs?**
  - Yes: 54%
  - No: 46%

- **If the answer to the above is yes, which drugs have you tried?**
  - Cannabis: 64%
  - Heroin: 3.2%
  - Ecstasy: 18%
  - Acid: 19.3%
  - Barbiturates: 6.9%

### Political Attitudes

- **Do you intend to vote in the forthcoming general election?**
  - Yes: 57.4%
  - No: 19.6%

- **If the answer to the above is yes, which party will you vote for?**
  - Labour: 11%
  - Conservative: 12%
  - Liberal: 11%
  - SNP: 11%
  - SP Auspices: 9%
  - Other: 26%
  - Don't Know: 0%
The Students’ Union

Are you aware of the Students’ Union in existence in your college?
Yes 99.7%
No 0.3%

How often do you avail of Student’s Union services such as the shop, an entertainment event or personal advice from one of the officers?
once or more a week 81%
once a week 15%
ever 3.5%

Do you think your Students’ Union provides you with good value for money in terms of the range and quality of services it provides?
Yes 67.4%
No 30%

Are you a member of a club or society?
Yes 52.7%
No 47.3%

Religion

Do you regard yourself as belonging to one particular religion?
Yes 81%
No 17.9%
Don’t Know 6%

If the answer to the above is yes, which religion are you practising?
R Catholicism 72.9%
C of Ireland 2%
Lutheran 0.5%
Christian 2.3%
Born Again Chr 0.5%
Other 21.6%

Academic Affairs

How do you find the standard of lecturing in your college?
Excellent 3.7%
Very Good 31.7%
Average 56.8%
Poor 7.2%

Do you feel that lecturers and tutors should undergo compulsory training in teaching skills?
Yes 94.2%
No 5.5%

Do you feel that there are too many lectures and tutorials in an average week?
Yes 48.4%
No 50.4%

From your experience, how do you rate your college library service?
Excellent 7.8%
Very good 36.9%
Average 40.1%
Poor 14.7%
comments 5.6%

Are you aware of the existence and range of computer facilities available in your college?
Yes 94.2%
No 4.9%

Finance

Are you in receipt of a Maintenance grant?

Are you in receipt of a Maintenance Grant?
Yes 10%
No 90%

Are you aware of the existence and range of computer facilities available in your college?
Yes 55.9%
No 42.7%

DIT Students Design Amnesty T-Shirts

DIT Students Stephen O’Neill and Liam Furloong, both Visual Communications students in Mountjoy Sq., came first and third in the competition to design t-shirts for the Irish section of Amnesty International recently.

Hazel Moore of RTC Athlone took second place. O’Neill’s winning entry consists of a new take on the recognised Amnesty symbol of the barbed-wire wrapped candle. Rather than the large icon planted in the middle of the shirt, O’Neill opted for a much smaller, bisected symbol.

For his own design, Liam Furloong chose a more traditional logo style consisting of two hands clasped, and the name ‘John Doe’ (American for Joe Soap) written beneath.

Margaret Berquist, Trading Manager for Amnesty International, told the DIT Examiner that the shirts should be available to buy within a month.

DITSU ONLINE

The new ditsu site is now taking orders for valuable Net space - and if you’re not in, you can’t play with us.

Of the five Colleges on-site (DIT Chatham Row not yet there) Kevin St has three societies - Carann Gaeilge and the Engineering Society - while Bolton St lag slightly behind with a link to the DIT Swim - Polo Team site.

For the latest up-to-the-minute full-scale true news contact:

darley@maths.kit.dit.ie
acomechubai@maths.kit.dit.ie
http://www.kit.dit.ie/ditsu

Suirbhé Dearcadh Mic Léinn AMITBÁC
The DIT Sports Day was held this year on 17 April in the spectacularly accoutred Aer Lingus Social Athletics Association sports complex. It was the culmination of many months hard preparation for those in charge of organising the grand day out. Herbert McClelland, Aungier St Sports Officer, was instrumental in stitching this managerial headache together and he received much assistance from students and staff across the DIT.

The day itself saw the corvette of the DIT fleet, Aungier St, swoop many of the events, while relative battleships like Bolton St and Kevin St listed severely to port and to starboard.

Among the competitive events organised for the day were Athletics, Aerobics and Archery, and some sports that didn't begin with the letter A. Of these others, Basketball and Badminton were both played indoors out of the sunshine, while Pitch & Putt and Tennis were available to play all day, for anyone who wished.

Legions of people turned out to watch the various soccer matches, played in the central green of the running track. Both 7-a-side and 11-a-side teams got a look in, as did Ladies soccer.

The event was sponsored by GUINNESS and Marathon Coaches, and the gang made their merry way to the Big Tree to slake big thirsts with Big Pints and other drinks, once the competitive mayhem was over.
Feeling stressed or anxious before examinations is a perfectly normal reaction. However, sometimes these feelings can get out of control and interfere with your examination preparation and performance. The following techniques will help to diminish or eliminate examination anxiety and help you perform more effectively.

MENTAL PREPARATION

Make a revision schedule. Make a special set of notes that contain summary information. Anticipate test questions. Use information from your notes, lectures, to predict questions. Practice answering these questions.

What questions do you need to ask about the test?

1. How many questions?
2. How much time is allocated?
3. What chapters or part of the course does the test cover?
4. How many marks are allocated to each question?
5. Can I use a dictionary, calculator?

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Get a good night’s sleep. Use breathing by breaths exercise if you have trouble falling asleep.
Allow time for a healthy breakfast. Avoid too much sugary foods or tea/coffee. A glucose drink right before the examination may help to sustain you.
Allow extra time to get to college on the day of the test.

USING TEST TIMES WISELY: THE FIVE STEPS

As you work through the test, following these five steps for answering questions:

Step 1: Read the whole paper through and highlight and underline important words.
Step 2: Check how many questions must be answered in each section and read each question again, putting a mark beside all that you might attempt. Now select those that you will answer.
Step 3: Allocate time for each question and start with the question that you are most comfortable with.
Step 4: Plan out each answer clearly before you begin.
Step 5: At the end always check over your answers and proof read for mistakes.

Tommy Cooke, the Community Education Links Co-ordinator was appointed by the DIT on a half-time basis in September 1996, with a view to identifying, developing and co-ordinating DIT initiatives in relation to disadvantaged communities. The Links Programme is the consolidation of existing voluntary schemes carried out on a voluntary basis by around 60 students and 10 staff.

The Institute’s situation in the inner city makes it a practical place in which to focus initial strategies. Existing strategies include supervised study programmes in local primary and secondary schools, studentships to DIT students to help them remain in college, a conference on third level colleges and their local community, and the provision of redundant but working equipment to schools most in need.

Of the schools involved in the programme, Whitefriar St and Francis St are both primary schools, and Kings Inns, Warrenmount and Bull Alley, secondary schools. The pupils in these schools are linked with “mentors” — DIT students and staff — who tutor them on a one to one basis. Gaeltacht scholarships are also made available by the DIT for the pupils.

Also included in the Links Programme brief is the Bull Alley project, in which pupils in the Liberties School at Bull Alley are made aware of the benefits of second and third level education. The project facilitates the demonstration of aspects of courses and research which the kids can relate to, like computer design, satellite tracking and other techniques liable to evoke their interest. A summer school has been organised for this year.

Tommy Cooke points out that, “These kids have no concept of third level. By bringing them across the threshold of the college they get to see people just like themselves .... It’s a process of breaking down barriers. through which myths of ‘brainy’ gown-wearing swots yakking about improving the Universe and other such inaccuracies can also be scotched. The Studentships total £1,500 annually, a considerable amount of financial assistance to those who would otherwise be forced to drop out of college. The DIT awarded eleven such scholarships this year. “Third Level Colleges and the Local Community - a Challenge for the Future” was the title of the conference held in November to highlight the problems of social exclusion and disadvantage encountered by those in many inner city schools. The delegation numbered in the region of 180 individuals, 30% of which were DIT staff.

To promote an improvement in the facilities available to pupils in these schools, the DIT Links Programme has also made available 50 computers which will be distributed throughout the schools very shortly.

LINKS PROGRAMME

Members of the Links Programme having received certificates of participation. The programme was initiated in September 1996.
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