

# Case Study: Atlantic Technology University, Galway



*This case study, describing the problem that ATU had and how The Student Eatwell Handbook helped them. While this is specific to ATU, we believe their experience is common across most universities.*

<b>Who</b>	Atlantic Technology University (ATU) is a multi-campus technological university in the west and northwest of Ireland that delivers a rich combination of academic and research excellence, quality of life and opportunity. <a href="https://www.atu.ie/">https://www.atu.ie/</a>
<b>Problem</b>	ATU were concerned about the number of students having problems or dropping out due to poor nutrition, or lack of money due to lack of knowledge about budgeting and shopping.
<b>Solution</b>	We provided a simple pack of information covering the basics of healthy eating, how to manage the practicalities and 8 recipes.
<b>Results</b>	ATU has used these resources to educate students as part of ongoing Healthy Campus activities.

## ATU's Problem

ATU was spending increasing time and resources helping students with academic or financial difficulties.

They saw that i) the performance of their students is dependent on student wellbeing and ii) a significant driver of wellbeing was the students' ability to manage practicalities of feeding themselves.

ATU was already providing a food bank and a breakfast club to support students, but this was not enough. They determined that some students could not shop, cook and feed themselves, due to lack of knowledge or skills in:

- Nutrition and healthy eating basics
- Buying and preparing food
- Managing a food budget or meal plan.

*For some, poor eating was creating anxiety and other mental health issues, which was leading to academic problems and even contributing to students dropping out.*

The university's Healthy Campus team requested resources that would support students with food skills and nutrition as a

contribution to the prevention of these problems.

They turned to us as a third year ATU Public Nutrition student, Hannah Toolan, had previously developed some of these ideas while on a work placement with Lynn.

## What we provided

In response to this request, we provided the following resources:

1. A 24 page A5 booklet with advice and a selection of simple recipes.
2. Trifold fliers with advice and a recipes.
3. A set of A5 Recipe Cards that could be handed out at their food bank and breakfast club.
4. Digital Content for use on websites and campus building screens.

The flyers and booklet were given to the third-year students of the Public Health Nutrition course who used them within an awareness day for the whole campus.

Eat Well was invited to attend as observers.

## Reception and Feedback

The resources were used for a Healthy Eating event, part of their curriculum and the “Mind Yourself” events to support new students. The students took part in cooking and tasting of the recipes in the university’s demo kitchen. We received feedback on the day and subsequently from Staff and the students.



### Students

The students were enthusiastic about the resources. Students commonly used the phrases such as “clear”, “easy to read”, “simple”, “practical”, “helpful”, “short”.



Among other specific comments we were received were:

- The recipes are so good – super simple!
- The booklet helped me plan my meals.
- The information helped me with portion control and my weekly shopping.

Students commonly felt that there was nothing else like this available to them.

### Staff

The teaching staff also felt the exercise had been worth it:

“Super day, enjoyed by both the students and teaching staff.”

The handbook is a wonderful resource that our students can use.

“Brilliant that it started with Public Health Nutrition student placement.



## Conclusion for other Universities

We believe that the needs that ATU saw among its student population are common across universities, and so there is a wider role for the Student Eat Well Handbook.



As ATU has a Nutrition course, they were also able to make additional use of the material by getting their students to run an event for the benefit of the rest of the campus, and have their students provide a cooking demonstration, using the recipes.

*We would like to thank the Department of Sport and Nutrition and the Healthy Campus Team at Atlantic Technology University, Ireland, for providing initial sponsorship, encouragement and support by getting their students to engage with and validate our work. <https://www.atu.ie/>*

## About the Student Eat Well Handbook



The Student Eat Well Handbook has been created by Lynn Burns and John Broxis to help students enjoy their time at university and set up life-long habits around self-care.

The Handbook contains material adapted for students on:

- **Eating Well and Wellbeing:** Why Eating Well is important, what we mean by Eating Well, and why Eating Well is different, for different people.
- **Managing the Practicalities:** The Practical aspects of managing your time, your kitchen, and kit, and your food to eat well.
- **Recipes and how to cook them:** Simple recipes along with explanations on weights and measures, servings and ingredients.

The Handbook also has many tips and tricks, and provides downloadable tools such as kit lists, shopping lists, store cupboard saviours, menu planners, and more.

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## About us

**Lynn Burns (RNutr)** is a registered nutritionist with years of experience translating evidence-based nutrition science into practical advice. She is a mother of university students and is a long-term Scout Leader having worked with young people for 15 years. Cooking for and enabling young people to cook, seeing how these skills support independence and better university lives has inspired this project.



**John Broxis** When not consulting for Central Banks, John has worked with Lynn for many years within scouting, planning food for as many as 200 people, organising events for young people and mentoring them. John has a passion for empowering young adults to be healthy through the basics of Eating Well and being organised. He brings his skills in planning, training, technology and automation to develop and roll out the Eat Well messages.

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## Our vision

We believe that Student life is increasingly challenging and while universities are putting a lot of effort into student welfare, there is not enough practical advice on how students should look after themselves. The Handbook is in its infancy, and we would like to develop this further over the coming years, in partnership with universities.

*For more information about The Student Eat Well Handbook and how we support universities, visit our website at [www.studenteatwell.com](http://www.studenteatwell.com) or contact us at [hungry@studenteatwell.com](mailto:hungry@studenteatwell.com).*