



Guidance Counsellor Conference 2025

Tuesday 30 September 2025



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
University College Cork, Ireland

Guidance Counsellor Conference Agenda 2025

Time	Talk	About the talk
9am - 9.30am	Registration and Refreshments	Sign in, grab a cuppa and meet and mingle with our staff before kick off at 9.30am!
9.30am - 9.40am	Welcome from UCC's Vice President Global Engagement	Our Vice President Global Engagement, Professor Ursula Kilkelly, will say a few words to open proceedings.
9.40am - 9.50am	Meet the UCC Student Recruitment Team	Meet members of the UCC Student Recruitment Team Lenka Forrest, Maggie O'Sullivan, Ian Wallace, Orla O'Regan, Jane Hurley and JP O'Connor.
9.50am - 10.30am	How data and institutional action have shaped the UCC response to early withdrawals.	With Noirin Deady & Danielle Byrne, Admissions Team
10.30am - 11am	BA Arts at UCC: Reform and Renewal	With Dr David Fitzgerald, Vice Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (Teaching & Learning). Also meet Professor Stephen Graham, the new Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences.
11am - 11.30am	Coffee Break	Time for a well-deserved hot beverage and catch up with colleagues.
11.30am - 12pm	Update on the new BSc (Hons) Sustainability degree (CK010)	With Professor Nuala Finnegan, Dean of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies
12pm - 12.20pm	What's new with HEAR & DARE schemes?	Overview with Martin Flynn, Engagement and Support Manager in Access UCC
12.20pm - 12.40pm	Tertiary Degrees 101	With Kathy Bradley & Gobnait Burke, FET-HE Programme Development Coordinators
12.45pm - 12.55pm	Departure to Aula Maxima	We move from Devere Hall to the iconic Aula Maxima where lunch will be served at 12.55pm.
12.55pm - 2.10pm	Lunch	Lunch - confirmation of attendance essential for catering purposes
2.10pm - 3.10pm	CPD: "Using GenAI for Career Guidance- Friend or Foe."	With Professor Thomas Garavan, Professor of Leadership Practice in CUBS, UCC
3.10pm - 3.25pm	Closing Comments	Lenka Forrest, Head of Student Recruitment, will formally close proceedings.

Welcome

Wi-Fi Login:

Welcome from UCC's Vice President Global Engagement



Meet the UCC Student Recruitment Team



- **Maggie O'Sullivan, Student Recruitment Advisor and Schools Liaison:** maggie.osullivan@ucc.ie
- **Ian Wallace, Student Recruitment & Liaison Officer, CoBL:** ian.wallace@ucc.ie
- **John Philip O'Connor, Recruitment Project Officer, CACSSS:** johnphilipoconnor@ucc.ie
- **Órla O'Regan, Student Recruitment Officer, STEM:** orlaoregan@ucc.ie
- **Jane Hurley, Student Recruitment, COMH:** COMH@ucc.ie

**How data and institutional
action have shaped the UCC
response to early withdrawals.**

Admissions update

- Round 1
 - Acceptances
 - Single Preference Applications
 - Late Round Offers
 - LC appeals/upgrades
 - First Year Change of Course
-
- Apply for more than one programme
 - 2026-2029/30... and beyond

BA (Arts) at UCC: Reform and Ren



BA (Arts) at UCC – Reform and Renewal

Dr David Fitzgerald, Vice-Head of College (Teaching and Learning),
College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
University College Cork, Ireland

**What comes to mind
when you think about
Arts degrees?**

Current BA (Arts) Subject Combinations

Credits	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
50/40/30/20/10	(HI) History	(GA) Gaeilge/Irish	(PO) Politics, (AR) Archaeology	(SC) Sociology, (FR) French	(EC) Economics, (EN) English, (RG) Religions and Global Diversity	(HS) Spanish, (IT) Italian, (PH) Philosophy
50/40/30/20		(HA) History of Art				
40/30/20/10		(GR) Greek & Roman Civilisation	(GE) German			(CC) Celtic Civilisation
40/30/20						(GG) Geography
30/20/10	(AS) Asian Studies	(FL) Folklore	(LT) Latin		(BD) Béaloideas	
30/20			(MS) Maths Studies			
20/10	(PU) Portuguese		(CH) Chinese Studies			
10	(CS) Computer Science			(SIM) Studies in Music	(GK) Greek	



Key New Features

First Year and Second Year Core Modules

- Transition to university life
- Emphasis on small group teaching
- Building cohort identity and sense of belonging
- Key academic skills
- Employability focus
- Interdisciplinary approaches to societal problems

Work-Integrated Learning

- Work placements
- Research internships
- Industry/community-partnered projects
- Work-readiness embedded throughout curriculum

New Structure – Second Year onwards

Joint Honours

- Students study two subjects from Second Year onwards
- Maintains existing strengths
- Develops rounded approach to problem-solving
- Meets Teaching Council requirements

Denominated Pathways (under development)

- Students focus on one specialized area from Second Year onwards
- Clearer trajectory towards postgraduate programmes and employment
- Foster interdisciplinary learning
- Greater curricular coherence

Joint Honours

- Archaeology
- Asian Studies
- Béaloideas
- Celtic Civilisation
- Economics
- English
- Digital Humanities
- French
- Gaeilge/Irish
- Greek & Roman Civilisation
- German
- Folklore
- History
- History of Art
- Latin
- Maths Studies
- Politics
- Religions and Global Diversity
- Sociology

Denominated Pathways - Sample (Draft) Titles

- Applied Archaeology and Heritage
- Arts in Culture and Society
- Economics
- Exploring Changing Environments
- Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Global Cultures and Communication
- Historical Studies
- International Relations
- Irish Literary and Cultural Traditions: Past and Present
- Léann na Gaeilge: Cultúr agus Teanga
- Reading Worlds: Texts, Cultures and Technologies.
- Storytelling, Narratives and Textualities across Cultures and Media

Feedback Poll on Proposed Changes

Feedback on Draft Pathways

Wrap-Up Question

Thank You!

Coffee Break

Update on the new BSc (Hons) Sustainability degree (CK010)





CK010 BSc (Hons) Sustainability

First Intake September 2026



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
University College Cork, Ireland

Why a Degree in Sustainability at UCC?

UG Degree Sustainability

- Practice
- Research
- Education

Impact and
Engagement

Sustainability and Climate Action
Plan 23-28

 Green Gown Awards
International





Prof Hannah Daly



“Sustainability is the defining challenge- and opportunity - of our time. To secure a thriving future for both people and the planet, we must go beyond theory and put sustainability into action. This programme equips students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to drive

CK010 BSc (Hons) Sustainability: Vision

- **Sustainability leaders and change-makers**
- Using Cork and UCC as living labs of sustainability
- Commitment to deep inter- and transdisciplinarity
- Innovative core;
- Arts, Social Sciences, Law, Business, Medicine and Health, Sciences, Chemistry, Engineering, BEES, Food Science;
- Global focus: Study Abroad, Work-Integrated Learning;
- Radical and collective pedagogy.

CK010 BSc (Hons) Sustainability: Development

- Highly consultative across 4 colleges, students, teachers and employers
- Led by Prof. Nuala Finnegan (Dean of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies) and Prof. Hannah Daly (Programme Director), collaboration with the Sustainability Academy, Dr Tracey Skillington (CACSSS) and Dr Ed Lahiff (CUBS)

Responses from our Employers

2 x Employer Consultation x 2

Focus Groups with 10 enterprise representatives:

- Positive responses;
- Openness to hiring and providing work placements;
- Emphasis on transversal skills like leadership, change management, dealing with complexity, influencing behaviour change, communication, storytelling and the ability to take initiative.

 An tIonad Comhaltaithe
Ardáil agus Cumarsaíocht
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Janssen 



 Energy for generations

Fexco 

ARUP

 BUILDERS
SISK
CONTRACTORS



 CARBERY

CK010 BSc (Hons) Sustainability: Practicalities

- Level 8, 4-year degree; planned intake of 65
- Common **interdisciplinary core** throughout
- From Year 2 students will choose a **thematic stream**:
 - *Sustainability, Science and Climate Action*
 - *Sustainability, Society and Culture*
 - *Sustainable Business and the Circular Economy*

Career

Industry Sectors:

- Energy/Clean Technology
- Pharma
- Food and drink
- Consultancy
- Natural resource management
- Retail or Wholesale
- Professional services
- Construction
- Education and Training
- Hospitality and recreation
- Tourism and Heritage
- Health and social care
- Financial services
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Manufacturing
- ICT and Telco products/'/services
- Not for profit/social enterprise
- Technology
- Technical and scientific services
- Transport, logistics and storage
- Real estate
- Media & Communications

Other Organisations:

- United Nations
- European Environment Agency
- European Commission
- Government Departments & Local Authorities
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Teagasc
- Community Development
- Diplomatic Services
- Academia
- Policymaking enterprises
- Regulatory agencies and utilities
- Government and intergovernmental organizations
- International

Roles:

- Climate scientist
- Sustainability manager
- Environmental consultant
- CSR manager
- Strategic change manager
- Climate Change Analyst
- Compliance Manager
- Environmental Economist
- Environmental Specialist
- Sustainability Specialist/Management/Director
- Energy audit coordinator
- Programme Manager – Social Impact
- Sustainability communication
- Farm Engagement Executive
- Environmental justice advocacy
- Energy conservation and management
- Waste/recycling operations
- Program manager for non-profit
- ESG Associate
- Business Leader in Nature and Biodiversity Solutions

CK010 BSc (Hons) in Sustainability Starting in 2026

**Thank you and we are happy
to answer all your questions**

What's new with HEAR & DARE schemes?

DARE

DISABILITY
ACCESS
ROUTE TO
EDUCATION



HEAR

HIGHER
EDUCATION
ACCESS
ROUTE



Tertiary Degrees 101

Further Education and Training - HIGHER EDUCATION ROUTE



MTU
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University



cetb
Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Chorcaí
Cork Education and
Training Board



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chiarraí
Kerry Education and Training Board

LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Gobnait Burke (086) 2901183 gobnait.burke@corketb.ie

Kathy Bradley (086) 1657884 kathy.bradley@corketb.ie

feather@corketb.ie

 **National Tertiary Office**
Oifig Thrasachta **Náisiúnta**

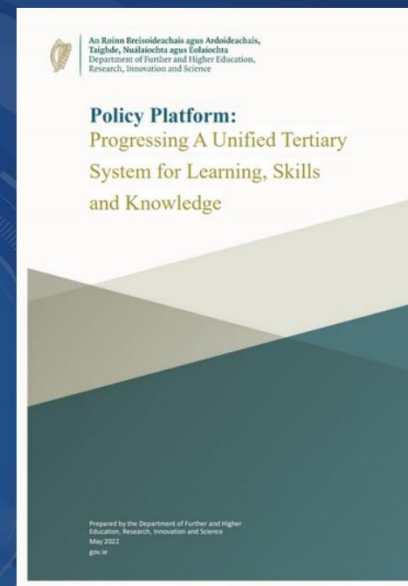
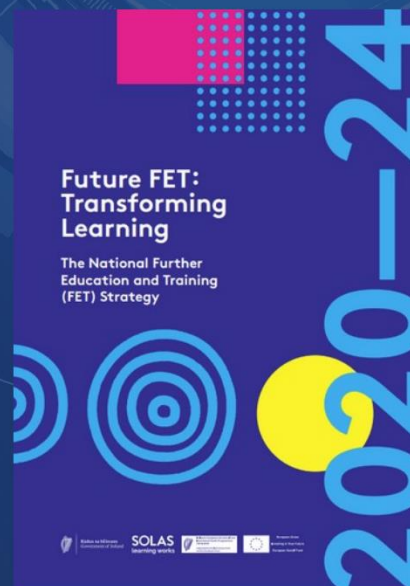
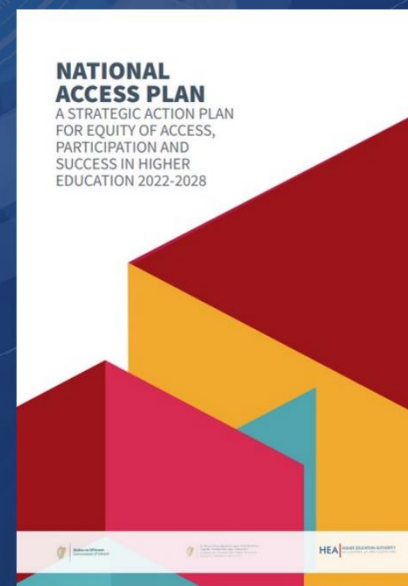
Policy Context

 **National Tertiary Office**
Oifig Thrasachta Náisiúnta

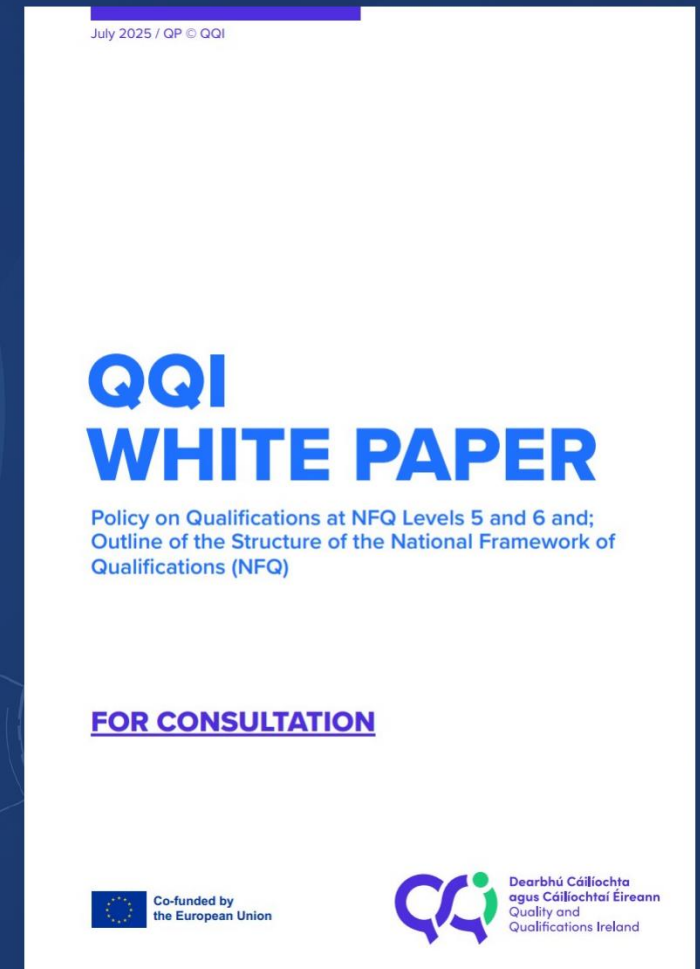
Transitioning pathways from Further Education to Higher Education

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN EILABHÁS UM ARDOIDEACHAIS

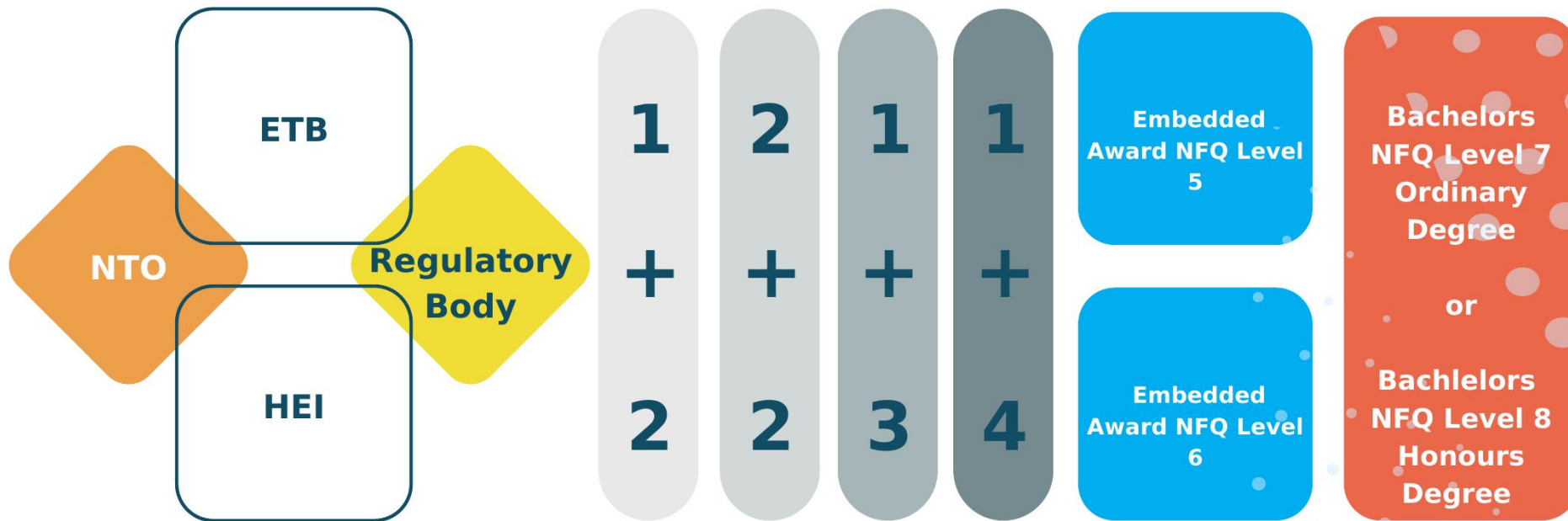
SOLAS
learning works



**Policy on
Qualifications at
NFQ Levels 5 and 6
and; Outline of the
Structure of the
National Framework
of Qualifications
(NFQ)**



Tertiary Degree Model

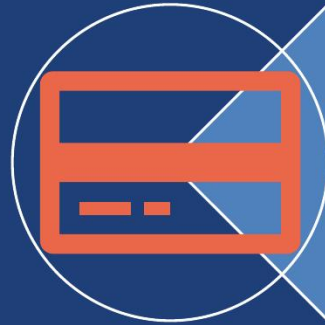


- Integration of theory and practice through further education, university and placement-based learning.
- Competencies and learning outcomes aligned to ensure that required by a regulator proficiencies are achieved.
- Embedded awards are built into the degree, so that if a student, for whatever reason, needs to leave before completion have recognition of their learning.
- Same quality and vocational pedagogy
- Same Quality of the final award

Some of the Unique Benefits:



No tuition or contribution fees while studying at the College of Further Education.



Student cards for both institutions and access to student supports on both campuses for example, sports facilities.



Learner Centric Approach - Smaller classroom sizes, more teaching hours and a focus on lifelong learning and core academic skills.





Tertiary Degrees in University College Cork



Bachelor of Social Work

route from Cork College of Further Education and Training (FET)



Scan me!



BSc Occupational Therapy

routes from Cork College of FET and Kerry College



Additional tertiary degrees available in the Cork and Kerry region available through our MTU partners

**BSc in Process Manufacturing
Practice & Technology
(Carrigaline)**

**BA (Hons) in Animation, Visual
Effect and Motion Design
(Level 8)**

**Bachelor of Science (Honours)
in General Nursing
(Level 8)**

**Bachelor of Science (Honours) in
Mental Health Nursing (Level 8)**



A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a white lab coat, is smiling and looking slightly to her left. The background is a blurred hospital room with medical equipment and another person in the distance.

It's great when you
actually get to experience

https://nto.heia.ie/courses/

National Tertiary Office
Oifig Thrasachta Náisiúnta

Courses About Student Financial Support FAQs News

You are here: [Home](#) / [Courses](#) ↓

Courses

Tertiary Degrees are co-designed and co-delivered by the Education and Training Boards and Higher Education Institutions to provide seamless pathways from Further Education to Higher Education.

I want to study

Province

Search by keyword or county

Find your course

Search



Please refer to the NTO website <https://nto.heia.ie/courses/> for up to date information on all programmes. Applications are expected to open in early November 2025.



Commence your degree study in the Further Education and Training Campus or College of your local Education and Training Board and then progress with guaranteed access to continue your degree studies in higher education.

Find out more about the new Joint Tertiary Degrees for 2024

FAQs

Do You Have Questions?

Below you'll find answers to the most common questions you may have on the new Joint Tertiary Degrees. Also, please feel free to check out our Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn social media accounts. If you still can't find the answer you're looking for, just [Contact us!](#)

What is a Joint Tertiary Degree?	+
How do I decide what course is right for me?	+
How can I apply for a Joint Tertiary Degree?	+
Are there courses available in the sector I am interested in?	+
Will I have access to the facilities of both the Education and Training Board and the Higher Education Institution?	+
What will I pay?	+
What are the entry requirements?	+
Do I need the same leaving certificate points as I would need for CAO entry?	+
Is this a degree programme?	+



Further Education and Training
- HIGHER EDUCATION ROUTE





National Tertiary Office Oifig Thrasachta Náisiúnta

Transitioning pathways from Further
Education to Higher Education

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tUdaráis um Ard-Oideachas

SOLAS
learning works



Contacts:

email: info@nto.ie
Website: www.NTO.ie
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ntoireland/>
Twitter: @NTOIreland
Instagram: @ntoireland

Your Regional Tertiary Manager Contacts:

Gobnait Buke (086) 2901183 gobnait.burke@corketb.ie
Kathy Bradley (086) 1657884 kathy.bradley@corketb.ie
Feather@corketb.ie



Further Education and Training - HIGHER EDUCATION ROUTE



LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Gobnait Burke (086) 2901183 gobnait.burke@corketb.ie

Kathy Bradley (086) 1657884 kathy.bradley@corketb.ie

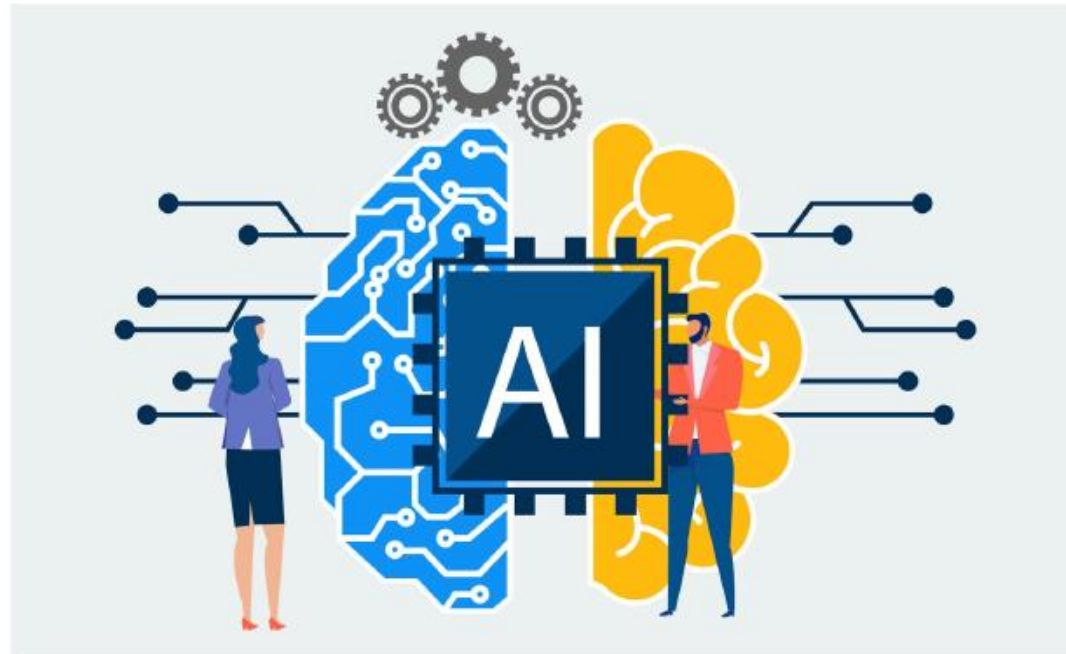
feather@corketb.ie

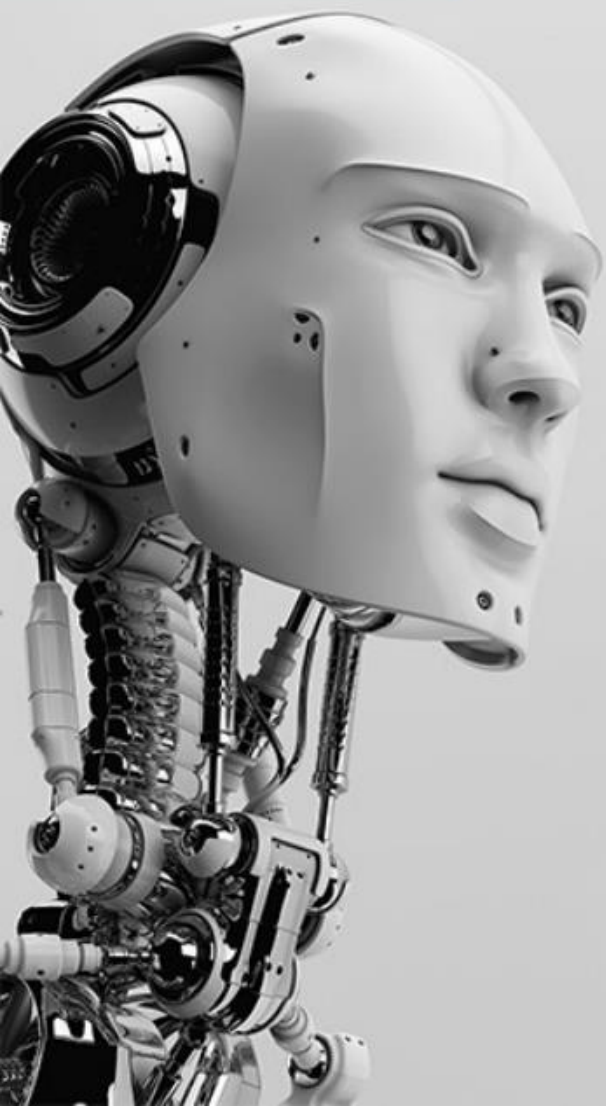


Lunch

CPD: Using GenAI for Career Guidance- Friend or Foe.

With Professor Thomas Garavan, Professor of Leadership Practice in CUBS, UCC



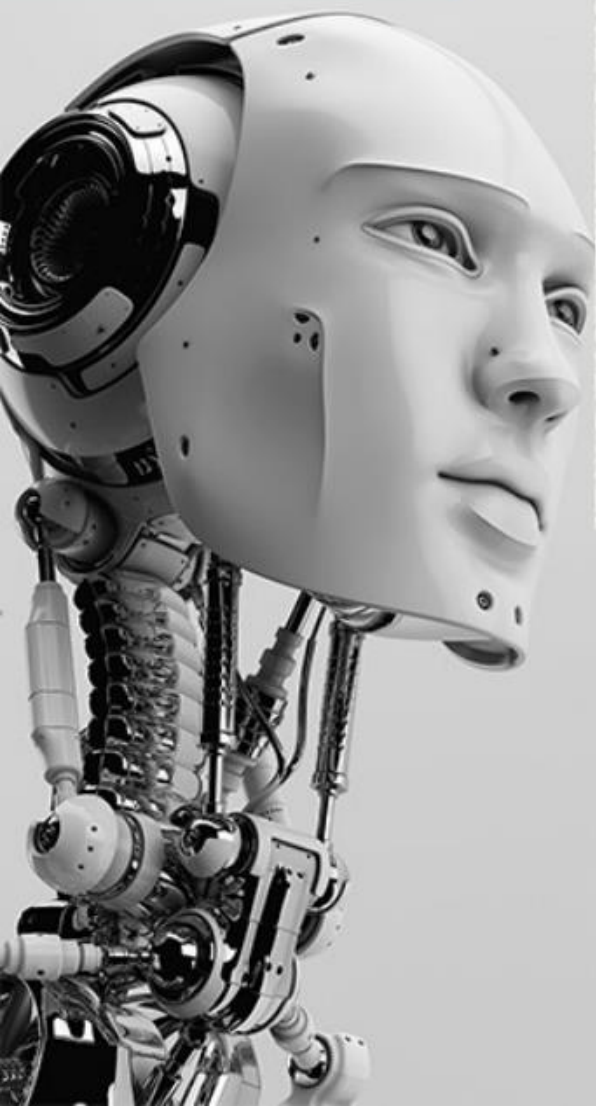


AI and the Guidance Counsellor Role: Friend or Foe? Substitute or Complement?

Presented by:

**Professor Thomas Garavan, CUBS, University College Cork
Guidance Counsellor Conference, UCC. 30th September 2025.**

What is AI?



- AI is defined as intelligent agents that receive precepts from the environment and take action that affects the environment.
 - ❖ **Two types of AI:**
- **Narrow AI**, which refers to systems that perform one or a few specific tasks. E.g., A system capable of producing written text in various forms, such as GPT4.
- **General AI**, which is intended to perform most of the activities that humans can do. A pipe dream at this time





What is AI?

- AI guidance can be generally defined as synchronous or asynchronous guidance using AI or a computer instead of a human guidance counsellor.
- Here, the AI chatbot replaces the human counsellor.
- This could take an intermediate form involving the guidance counsellor receiving advice during a session from an AI bot.



What are the Potential Upsides and Downsides?

UPSIDES

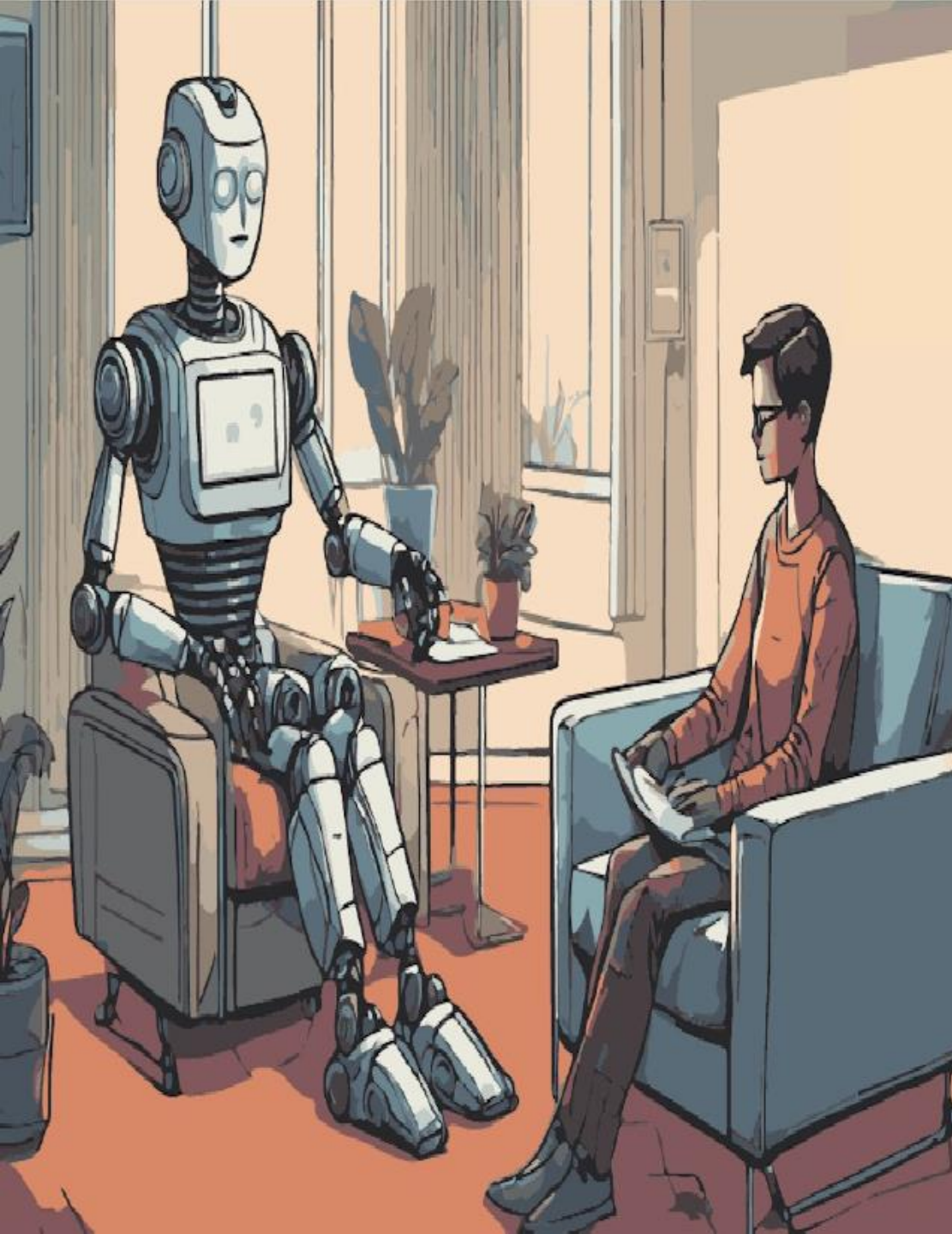
- Can provide immediate 24/7 support to students seeking career advice and information.
- Reduce the significant work burden that guidance counsellors experience, including the lack of resources.
- Very useful for the informational aspects of guidance counselling.
- Encourages students to be proactive and agentic in their career search behaviours
- Support ongoing communications between the counsellor and the student, fostering a continuous and supportive relationship.



What are the Potential Upsides and Downsides?

DOWNSIDERS

- Important ethical considerations around privacy and data security.
- Fears that the AI Human will replace the human guidance counsellor and eliminate relationship components, including empathy, tacit knowledge, understanding, and human interaction.
- Major evidence of career indecision by students and declines in job, work, and career-related knowledge.
- Significant evidence of misinformation and inaccurate information arising from peer influences.
- Major evidence of the digital divide, where it might not be available in some schools.



What do the Guidance Counsellors think of AI?

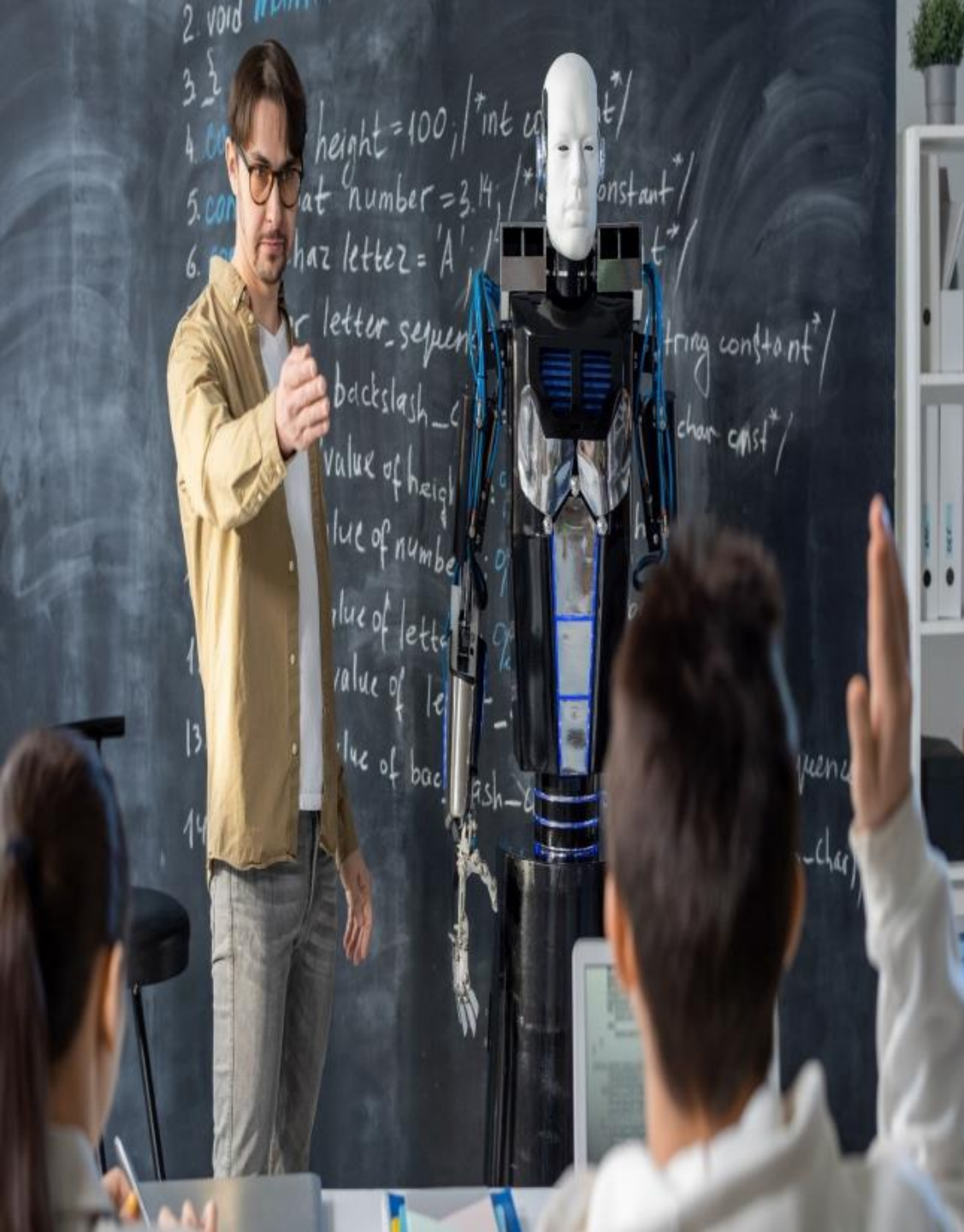
Structured interviews with 20 Guidance Counsellors. A good cross-section to reflect the digital divide. What did they tell us?

- Guidance Counsellors are overburdened and resource-scarce.
- More experienced guidance counsellors have limited knowledge of or the potential of AI in guidance and counselling.
- Recently graduated guidance counsellors are more enthusiastic and make more use of it.
- Some have fears about how it will impact their role and fears around how schools might view AI in the context of job security



What do the Guidance Counsellors think of AI?

- Limited investment by schools in AI resources and very little CPD around AI and the skills to use it.
- Potential challenge to professional practice and creates significant professional development needs.
- Some view it as something that they can leverage to enhance their work, but never substitute for the human touch.
- Some had negative attitudes towards AI and major uncertainty about its use.
- Some negative responses concerning institutional responses and institutional encouragement.
- Most commonly used AI includes Google Gemini, Google NotebookLM, Pymetrics, LinkedIn Explorer, Yoodli+resume Helper, and Final Round AI



What do Students Think?

- Depending on the type of AI, it might be difficult for people to stand out. Generating generic resumes, etc.
- They realise that many organisations now use AI for screening and recruitment.
- Concerns about the accuracy of information generated.
- Lack of skills in formulating the questions to ask AI.
- Generic outputs, Bias, and Discrimination.
- 1-1 advice is best. Cannot replace the guidance counsellor. **They are key.** They provide tacit insights and reassurance.

Future Scenarios for Guidance Counselling



Chatbots and Virtual Assistants.

- AI-powered chatbots and personal assistants can potentially be revolutionary.
- They can provide 24/7 support, answer student queries, offer guidance, and provide instant responses.
- They are AI-powered tools that leverage natural language processing and machine learning algorithms.
- They have the potential to recognise students' concerns and provide relevant resources.
- They can be tailored to meet the specific needs of individual schools and students
- They require investments by schools.



Future Scenarios for Guidance Counselling

Predictive Analytics

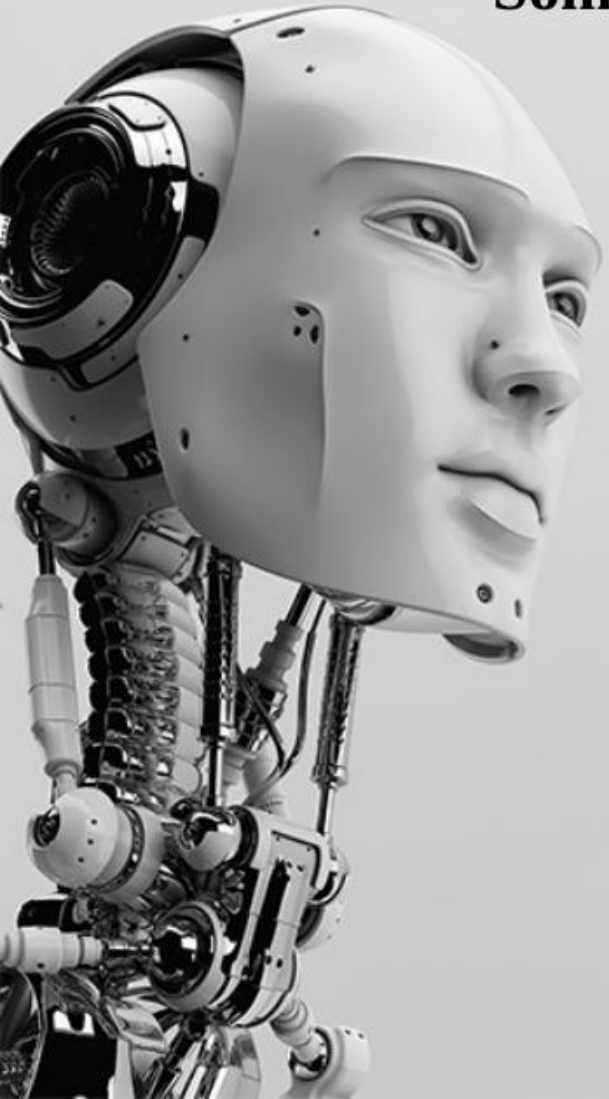
- AI can analyse vast amounts of data and combine data on academic performance, ability scores, personality, and career interest inventories.
- This data can be used to identify courses, future careers, and help with targeted interventions.
- Some of the psychometric instruments used do have questionable validity and reliability.

Personalised Guidance

- AI systems have the potential to enable personalised guidance, generate tailored reports, and career paths.
- This type of support enables guidance counsellors to focus more on high-touch, high-impact support rather than generic guidance.

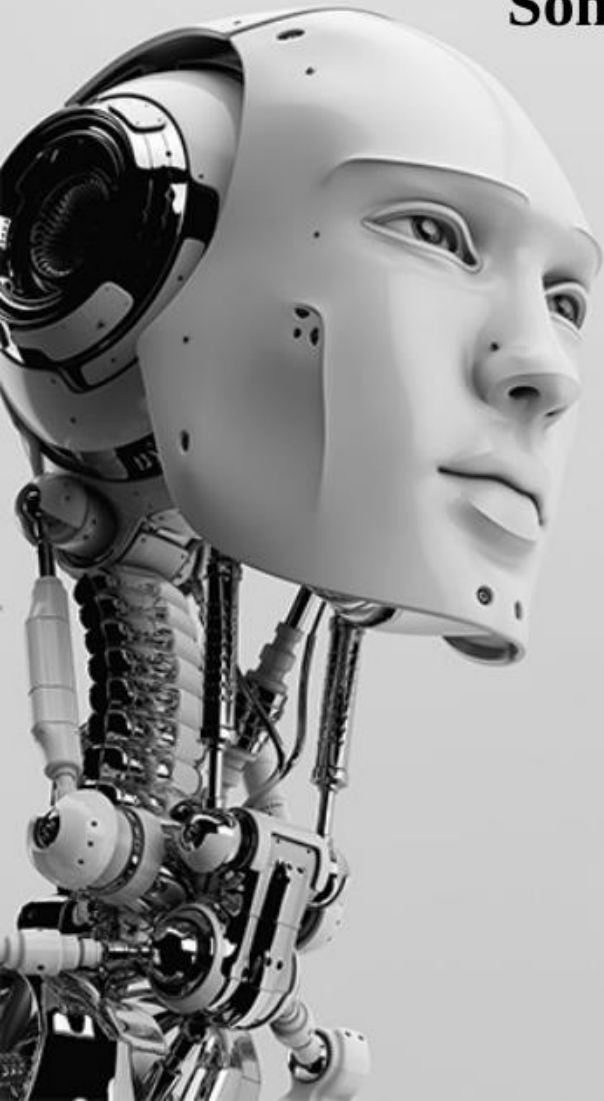
Some Recommendation

- Schools and the Department need to invest in AI platforms that help busy and overstretched guidance counsellors to provide tailored guidance.
- Particular administrative tasks can be automated, such as when students require specific pieces of information.
- Enhance student engagement with interactive AI technologies that are accessible and easy to use.
- Embracement of AI as a reality that can be integrated into practice. Gradual integration into practice.
- Develop clear institutional policies and conduct research on effectiveness



Some Recommendations

- Encourage self-directive and agentic behaviours by students.
- Provide and fund CPD for guidance counsellors. The role of ongoing training and professional development cannot be overemphasized.
- Incorporate AI into training and education programmes for Career Guidance teachers.
- Stakeholders need to work together to achieve the successful integration of AI technologies.
- Help to reduce fears and continually measure the effectiveness of AI.



Questions



Thank you all for joining