

FAQs

Safety, Health, and Welfare at
Work | Higher Diploma

Many thanks for your interest in the Higher Diploma in Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work (HDSHWW) at Adult Continuing Education (ACE), University College Cork (UCC).

Please read the following information carefully:

Course duration, level, and delivery:

The Higher Diploma is a 2 Year (mid-Sept to May), level 8, part-time course, taught via blended delivery.

Timetable:

Tuesday and Thursday: 6.30-9.30 PM. Lectures are online via Microsoft Teams.

Saturday: 6 per year of study, in person on UCC campus approximately every 3/4 weeks from 10.00-17.00.

The timetable may change for 2025/26 and will be finalised in August.

Please note that the blended delivery mode is reviewed annually (however we do not foresee any changes to the Tuesday and Thursday online delivery).

Are lectures recorded?

Tuesday and Thursday lectures are recorded, and the recordings are uploaded online so you can watch them back. However, it is strongly advised that you attend live on the evening, as the recordings are meant for use to recap on material should you need to do so. It can take up to a week for the recording to be available after the lecture has been delivered.

I might not be able to travel to Cork for the Saturdays on campus. Is this, ok?

While the Saturday sessions are recorded, we cannot always ensure the same experience for those watching the recording back later. Recording in person lectures doesn't always work as well as we would hope – sound is lost if the lecturer moves away from the podium, group work participation isn't possible if you aren't there, internet connection can drop, and any comments made by classmates are not captured. While we fully understand that from time-to-time things come up that mean students may miss the odd Saturday, enrolling on the course knowing you cannot attend the Saturdays isn't the best start and won't give you the best learning experience.

Where can I learn more about the course?

It is very important that you know this is the right course for you before you apply. The best way to find out is to read the module outlines. You will complete 12 modules on the course. Each module outline is linked below. These are subject to change for 2025/26.

Year 1

[AD5809](#) Human Factors in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

[AD5853](#) Risk Management

[AD5854](#) Technical Safety and Working Safely

[AD5857](#) Accident Prevention and Emergency Planning

[EH5802](#) Occupational Health and Health Promotion

[LW5801](#) Health and Safety Legislation

Year 2

[AD5810](#) Occupational Hygiene

[AD5856](#) Health and Safety Management

[AD5861](#) Environmental Issues within Health and Safety Practice

[BC5802](#) Chemical Safety and Toxicology

[EH5801](#) Epidemiology and Data Collection

Plus one from:

[AD5858](#) Researching Safety, Health and Welfare in Key Public Service Workplaces

[AD5859](#) Researching Safety, Health and Welfare in the Construction Sector

[AD5860](#) Researching Safety, Health and Welfare in the Pharma and Manufacturing Sectors

How do I know if I will be accepted onto the course?

Please see Requirements on the website linked above. We are strict on entry requirements as this is a challenging course and we want to ensure students can complete it successfully. If you have any questions contact the course coordinator. A final decision is not made until your application is fully submitted.

Will I have to do exams?

The course is wholly assessed via continuous assessment. See details related to assessments on the module outlines above (subject to change for 2025/26). Current assessments include essay, presentation, MCQs, group project, case studies. All are completed remotely.

What happens if I fail an assessment?

This doesn't happen often! We recognise that students on this programme are studying at level 8 and assess according to the level. If you have been accepted onto the course, you are well able to complete it! However, if you fail, you will be offered an attempt to repeat the assessment in the summer. The coordinator will guide you through that if necessary.

What happens if life gets in the way, and I need to defer my studies once started?

We will do whatever we can to support you. Contact the coordinator to go through the options.

I don't know whether to do this course or the Certificate in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work.

The Certificate in SHWW is level 7, is one year (Sept to May) and is fully online. The Higher Diploma in SHWW is level 8, is two years and is a hybrid course.

Look at both websites and review the entry requirements to see which course matches your past education and experience.

Generally, the Certificate will meet the criteria for an entry level HSS role. The Certificate has two options for entry – either funded via Springboard Plus, or self-funded by applying directly to UCC via the website linked above. Springboard+ is a government initiative offering free and heavily subsidised courses. If you are interested in applying for the CSHWW via Springboard+ please complete this Expression of Interest form and our Springboard+ coordinator will contact you about that process. Please note that funding for Springboard+ funding for 2025/26 is subject to confirmation, which is expected in May 2025.

In some instances, students go in at Certificate level and then get funding from their employer a bit further down the line to do the Higher Diploma. Some start with the Certificate and then goes straight into the Higher Diploma.

The Higher Diploma is the level employers tend to look for when recruiting a HSS Officer. This is general advice based on my experience of employers contacting me with job specifications to share with the classes, as all employers will have their own requirements. I am happy to discuss this on a call as it is important you apply for the correct course for you.

I completed the UCC level 7 Certificate in the past. Does this mean I can skip some modules in the Level 8?

Unfortunately, not. While some of the same material is covered in both courses, the modules in the level 8 go into more detail.

It's been a while since I studied. Are there supports available to help me?

Yes, you will have access to a range of support including UCC Skills Centre, who offer online workshops specifically for adult learners returning to education. These sessions help you to develop new skills and refresh old ones. The Skills Centre has significant free resources on their website, most of which you can access before being a registered UCC student, so you could start preparing for your studies over the summer before classes start.

The lecturers are very experienced and recognise that many people completing this course haven't studied recently and teach the class accordingly. Our main aim on the course is to support you to be successful in your studies!

Often one area that students struggle with is computer skills. You'll be required to use the internet to attend classes online and to research assignments, you'll need to use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint to write your assignments, and you will attend lectures on Microsoft Teams. You will also use UCC's online learning platform Canvas. Support is available with these, but basic knowledge is essential.

All UCC students will have access to Office 365 which includes software such as Word/Excel/PowerPoint etc. once registered.

What other UCC facilities can I avail of?

You will have access to many UCC services including the UCC Library (both in person and online), the Mardyke Arena, the UCC Skills Centre, UCC Clubs and Societies, and UCC Career Services (who have excellent online resources well worth checking out).

Who is this course accredited by?

The programme is jointly accredited by UCC and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) which is the largest health and safety membership organisation in the world and the only chartered body for health and safety professionals. Students can apply for student membership from IOSH upon enrolment. Graduates of the course meet the academic requirements for certified membership of IOSH.

Once you have started the programme, the course administrator will email you a letter which confirms you are a student on the course. This letter can be used to join IOSH. The letter will be emailed to your UCC email account (Umail).

How do I apply?

Once we open for applications around April/May, you will see an Apply Now button at the end of the website (if it is not there yet complete the Register your Interest form linked at the top of the website, and I will email you when we open for applications).

When completing the application, please follow the instructions above the Apply Now button carefully, as the application system is not very intuitive!

When applying, you pay 50% of the year 1 fees. Your application cannot be reviewed for an acceptance decision until you have paid this and until the required documentation has been uploaded (listed on the website). Please note that these fees will be refunded to you if you are not accepted onto the course. If you are accepted, the remaining 50% of the year 1 fees are due by January 31st.

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the application period. The most common reason for delays in decisions is that an applicant has not uploaded their documentation or has not paid the 50% of fees. Applicants who are sponsored (employer paying) need to check that their sponsor has returned the sponsorship form as their application cannot be reviewed until this has been done (see below question on employer paying for more information on this process.)

Can I pay in instalments, and is there any funding available from UCC? Can I apply for SUSI funding?

Unfortunately, ACE, UCC, is not in a position to accept fees paid in instalments. If you have concerns around fees, please see [this website](#), and [also this](#).

This course does not qualify for SUSI funding.

ACE have a strong relationship with the Lough Credit Union in Cork and secured a competitive student loan rate for ACE students, this rate is competitive in the market and is lower than other credit unions. For further details contact loans@lough.cu.ie

ACE also offers scholarships to refugees and asylum seekers. More information on that is [available here](#).

My employer is going to pay my fees, how do I organise that?

This is referred to as being a 'sponsored student'. You will apply via the Apply Now button on the website. During the application, you will tick that you are a sponsored student, and you will then be able to enter details of your sponsor. An email is sent to your sponsor to confirm they are paying your fees. Once they have filled in the required details, you'll be able to bypass the payment part of the application, upload your documents and submit it. Your sponsor will be invoiced for the fees after the course has started.

I am an employer/sponsor and want to pay the fees for an applicant.

Please see the above question. Your employee applies directly to UCC and fills in your details in the sponsor field on the application. You then complete the form that is emailed to you. Their application will not be reviewed for an acceptance decision until you have done this. Once the course starts, you'll be invoiced for the fees (usually October/November). If you do not wish to pay 100% of the fees, you can state this on the form you are emailed. Any queries around invoices/receipts must be sent to acefinance@ucc.ie

Will I have a graduation?

Yes, and we'd love to see you here for it! (but it's not mandatory). Graduations (conferrings) are generally held in October/November and are organised by the UCC Events team.

I am an international student. Will enrolling on this course allow me to apply for a student visa to study in Ireland?

This is a part-time course, and enrolment does not make the participant eligible for a student visa.

I have more questions – who can I ask?

Please email mhorajska@ucc.ie