

The Old Bar Refurbishment has been completed - and is now an autism friendly and accessible '[Calm Zone](#)' with different spaces designed to cater for the diverse needs of our students

### The Calm Zone

### Outdoor Sensory Spaces

Funding from **Bank of Ireland** has supported the development of outdoors sensory spaces, including a **Hawthorn Garden**. These spaces will provide respite from a (usually) busy campus.

## Autism Friendly University Initiative

### Autism&Uni Toolkit

We have adapted the [Autism&Uni Toolkit](#) for UCC students to provide information and help with many aspects of the student journey.

### Staff Training

A proposed **Digital Badge in Autism Awareness** is being developed alongside workshops for staff.

### Students' Union

The Students' Union especially welcome the upcoming opening of the [Calm Zone](#) to students and believe the [Autism&Uni Toolkit](#) will be of great benefit to all students, not just those on the spectrum.

### Student & Stakeholder Engagement

Students have been involved in developing both the [Autism&Uni Toolkit](#) and the [Calm Zone](#). Relevant stakeholders have been consulted to identify potential challenges for new students with autism.

- The next phase of the project will focus on staff awareness and training, as this will enable staff to understand the challenges that some of our autistic students (and staff) experience in the university environment.
- A Digital Badge is being proposed to provide staff with a more thorough understanding of how autism can impact on the student experiences, and ways staff can make changes that will make their practice and communication more 'autism-friendly'.

# Update

## Dec 2020