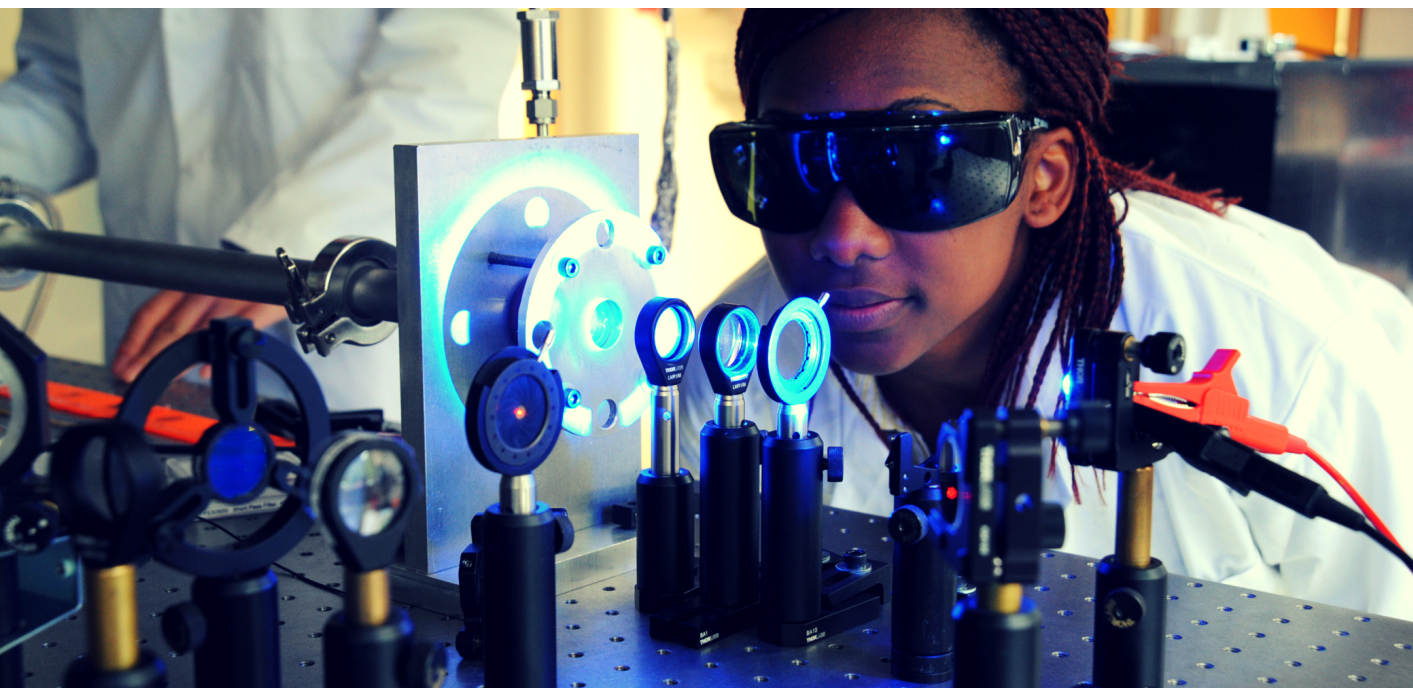


EMPLOYABILITY & EMPLOYMENT GUIDE





A research-based education emphasises a hands-on approach to learning. UCC students are immersed in real-life, skills-building scenarios throughout their programmes of study. (Photo: Career Services)

INTRODUCTION

University College Cork (UCC) graduates are highly sought-after by employers: 93% of our graduates are in employment or further studies within nine months of graduating. We attribute this success to the approach to employability and employment that we demonstrate as a research-intensive university. UCC prioritises a holistic approach to the development of professional skills and a strong work ethic that will enable our students to chart progressive, fulfilling career paths. Our degree programmes provide an intellectually rigorous, research-based education of the highest standard that is grounded in practice. Our employability and career development initiatives are delivered through curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and are supported by multiple units across the university.

This UCC Institutional Employability and Employment Guide outlines our uniquely connected approach. Employability is central to UCC's Academic Strategy 2018-2022, which seeks to renew and strengthen our educational offering through a *Connected Curriculum*. A *Connected Curriculum* sets out to prepare students for their future through instilling in them a collaborative, enquiry-based approach to lifelong and life-wide learning.

It outlines models of best practice we have in our institution but also projects that will continuously develop and improve our educational offerings. The strategy is being met with transformative investment in our people and our infrastructure. Our commitment to developing our staff, together with our digital and physical infrastructure will put UCC at the forefront in delivering a transformative educational experience.



PROFESSOR JOHN O'HALLORAN

Deputy President and Registrar

WHAT IS EMPLOYABILITY?



UCC Neuroscience graduate and PhD student Katie Togher whose research assesses the impact of prenatal mental health on the microbiome in pregnancy and on the development of the infant microbiome in the first few months of life. (Photo: UCC)

As a research-intensive university, we define employability as the development of graduate attributes, skills and values that enable and empower students to identify, create and succeed on their chosen life and career paths. Employability delivered effectively maximises graduates' ability to secure, sustain and advance personal development and employment for the rest of their working lives. UCC develops students' employability through graduate attributes and values acquired through our *Connected Curriculum*, which spans the core curriculum and the extensive network of co- and extra-curricular activities available at UCC. We strive to take a connected approach to developing students' employability and this responsibility is shared by each unit, department and school within UCC. Employability is connected to all aspects of the student experience. In addition to acquiring disciplinary excellence, students are facilitated to develop career management skills, self-awareness, self-efficacy and related workplace skills, so they are equipped to manage their careers throughout their lives.



UCC continues to be a top source of graduate talent into Accenture as we find UCC students to be adaptable problem-solvers with a strong focus on getting the job done. These core skillsets on top of a very solid academic foundation mean UCC graduates deliver.



University Engagement Lead,
Accenture

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES



"Our core values and graduate attributes capture the uniqueness of a UCC education as a whole-of-life experience that develops character, professionalism and the capacity for critical and creative thought."

Graduate attributes refer to the “skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, that are applicable in a range of contexts”.

As a socially-minded, civically-engaged institution that teaches across all professions – law, health, medicine, engineering, business, science, technology, arts, education and the social sciences – UCC emphasises a citizenship approach to employability development. This is a holistic approach that emphasises the development of attitudes and values that support students and staff to contribute effectively to their community and

society. Our graduate attributes are rooted in values that reflect the history, heritage and mission of University College Cork. They are developed through our *Connected Curriculum*, which seeks to deliver programmes that nurture a range of skills and competencies across all disciplines.

Innovative assessment will be central to our approach. Assessment practices will connect learning outcomes with graduate attributes, employability skills and timely, formative and summative feedback empowering students to become self-regulated learners

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Creators, evaluators and communicators of knowledge

Independent and creative thinkers

Digitally fluent

Socially responsible

Effective, global citizens who recognise and challenge inequality

VALUES

Respect: For self, others and the environment

Ambition: Aims high, displays exemplary work ethic and strives to succeed

Compassion: Empathic, demonstrates care for self and others

Resilience: Perseveres, shows grit with a capacity for problem-solving and personal well-being

Integrity: Trustworthy, ethical and dependable

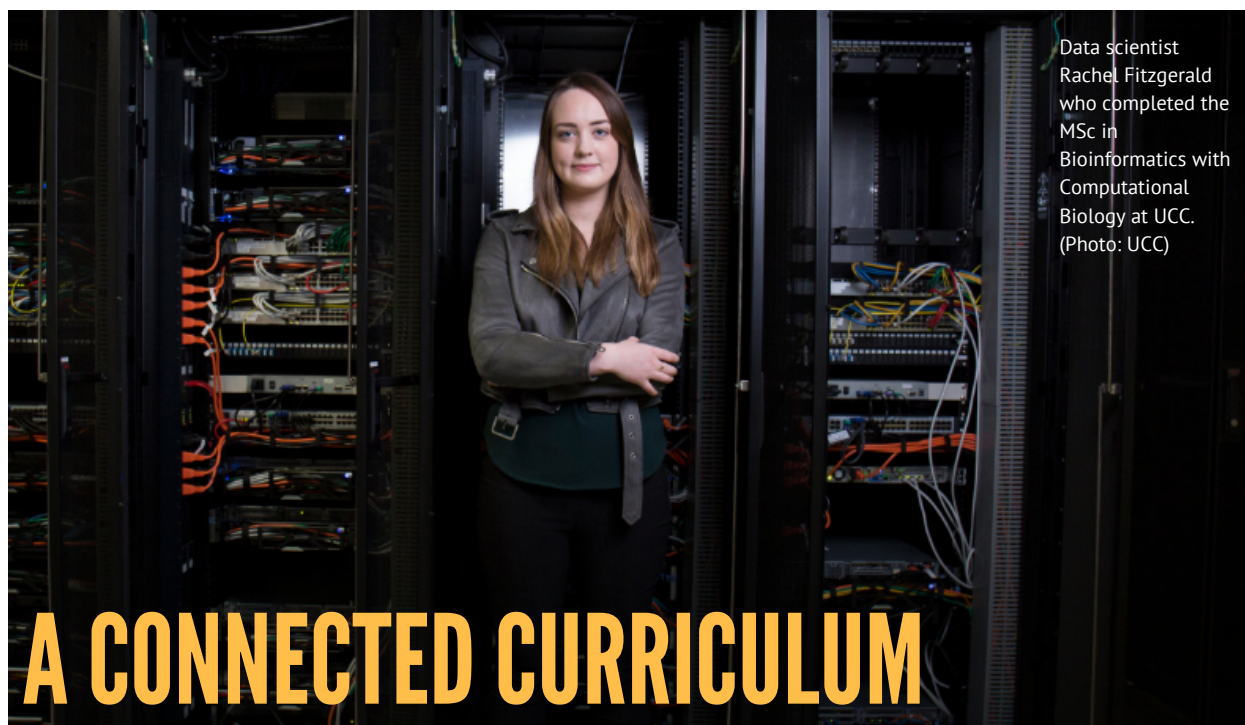


We have always had great success hiring UCC graduates and interns from a variety of disciplines at graduate and undergraduate level. We have been very impressed by the calibre of students from UCC, who bring varied experience, relevant industry knowledge and key skills.



Deloitte





Data scientist Rachel Fitzgerald who completed the MSc in Bioinformatics with Computational Biology at UCC. (Photo: UCC)

A CONNECTED CURRICULUM

A UCC educational experience is expressed through our *Connected Curriculum*, a framework of six distinct but interconnected cells that emphasise the importance of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in student development. The *Connected Curriculum* is designed to prepare students for their future, combining academic with professional, community-based, field-based and inter-professional learning. This develops values, skills and aptitudes that promote civic participation, social inclusion, sustainability and impactful global citizenship.

Professional development opportunities are integral to our degree programmes. Academic learning is



UCC's Connected Curriculum: Six interconnecting cells that capture the learning experiences we emphasise in our degree programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

connected to the workplace either through work-based learning opportunities, specific professional training modules for example Professional Practice in Archaeology or a range of pedagogies including problem-based learning, project learning, guest lectures and collaborative learning.

There are several examples of excellent practice in connecting our curriculum to employability in UCC. For example, students on our BSc in Business Information Systems spend six months on a business internship programme. A dedicated placement team provides the students with tailored support and skills development including CV and interview preparation and networking skills. The College of Medicine and Health has engaged Pebble Pad, an award-winning portfolio and personal development learning platform that allows students to record clinical skills while at UCC and for the duration of their career.

In 2016, the Irish Management Institute (IMI) merged with UCC, combining UCC's expertise and global reach with IMI's global ranking, reputation for excellence, unparalleled business community network and scalable business model to deliver distinctive, world-class executive education.



Students at UCC's School of Law simulate court cases in Moot Court. (Photo: UCC)

EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH A CONNECTED CURRICULUM

a. Placements

Over 90% of our programmes offer placements internationally and nationally either through organised work placements, placements with civil society organisations or the ERASMUS+ programme. Our Career Services manage 1,250 work placements annually in collaboration with 35 academic programmes.

Career Services deliver pre-placement, credit-bearing employability skills training and partner with academic departments and schools to deliver accredited, innovative employability modules such as the award-winning Transition to Professional Life module within the BA (Hons) Economics (through Transformational Learning).

b. Accredited programmes

Many UCC programmes are accredited by regulatory and/or professional bodies. This process gives UCC students an additional mark of assurance that the programmes are designed to meet the highest standards.

The benefits of accreditation for students are wide-ranging and can include:

- Eligibility to register with a regulatory professional body e.g. The Irish Medical Council or Teaching Council of Ireland;
- Eligibility to register with a non-regulatory professional body e.g. Psychological Society of Ireland;
- Exemption from or progression to certain professional exams e.g. Association of Chartered Certified Accountants exams or King's Inns entrance exams;
- Assurance that the programme is endorsed by the relevant professional body e.g. North-South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work.

Additionally, UCC's Quality Enhancement Unit provides annual accreditation reports to QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland), an independent state agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland.

A SELECTION OF PROGRAMMES FOR WHICH ACCREDITATION APPLIES

Accounting (BSc)
Analytical Chemistry (MSc)
Applied Psychology (BA)
Architecture (BSc/MArch)
Biomedical Science (Joint UCC/CIT BSc)
Chemistry (BSc)
Chemistry with Forensic Science (BSc)
Chemistry of Pharmaceutical Compounds (BSc)
Children's and General Nursing (BSc)
Civil & Environmental Engineering (BE)
Dentistry (BDS Hons)
Energy Engineering (BE)
Food Science (BSc)
Finance (BSc)
Intellectual Disability Nursing (BSc)
Law and Business/French/Irish (BCL)
Law (Pathways) (BCL)
Medicine (MB/BCH/BAO)
Mental Health Nursing (BSc)
Midwifery (BSc)
Occupational Therapy (BSc)
Planning and Sustainable Development (MPlan)
Pharmacy (BPharm/MPharm)
Process and Chemical Engineering (BE)
Professional Masters of Education (PME)
Science Education (BSc Ed)
Social Work (BSW)
Speech and Language Therapy (BSc)
Youth and Community Work (BSocSc)



From left to right: Barbara O'Gorman (Boston Scientific), Shay Nolan (UCC DSS), Aoire Keane (UCC student participant in the Boston Scientific Mentoring Programme), Shani Bird (Boston Scientific) and Eilish Walsh (Boston Scientific).

EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH A CONNECTED CURRICULUM

c. External partners in programme development

All new programmes at UCC are developed through a thorough and considered two-stage process with the input of students, employers, subject experts and internal and external stakeholders.

In the first, or Outline Approval stage of programme development, the programme team liaises with relevant stakeholders, which may include regulatory agencies, guidance counsellors, schools, employers, external examiners, relevant professional bodies, civic organisations and recent graduates to ensure that programme design benefits from external expertise and reference points. This enables the integration of placement or other experiential opportunities, where appropriate, and informs the programme learning outcomes.

During the second, or Full Programme Approval stage, internal peers and external stakeholders including employment and external subject assessors provide assurance that the programme design meets academic, student and employer requirements. This also provides an opportunity to enhance UCC's engagement with key employers. For example, the College of Medicine and Health programmes have significant input from the HSE as both potential employer and in programme design and delivery.

The involvement of professional regulatory accreditation bodies ensures statutory requirements are provided for in programme development. Students are key to programme development and student involvement on the programme approval panel ensures current and future students' perspectives are fully integrated. On successful launch of a programme, programme coordinators ensure that, where possible, guest lecturers from industry and discipline/subject experts participate in the delivery of modules. In addition, a number of UCC programmes engage with employers and industry through their programme advisory boards. Programme teams use the learning obtained from interactions with employers, alumni and professional accreditation bodies to inform programme development and change.

As part of the university's quality enhancement process, there is comprehensive consultation with all employer representatives in reviewing and developing programmes. The university is an active member of the South-West Regional Skills Forum, which brings employers and the education and training system together to meet the emerging skills needs of their region.



When we wanted to take on our first intern in 2017, we connected with UCC and were massively impressed with the quality of candidates. They continuously demonstrate that particular blend of skills and the drive and enthusiasm to learn more.



Mark Foley, UI/UX
Design Lead, Poppulo



Left to right: Lauren Morley, UCC BA Economics student; Laura Dillon, Head of Tax at Casey Stephenson; Jane Dunne-Terry, UCC BA Economics student.

EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



Former UCC Sports Star Award-winner Conor Dorman. A university education emphasises the holistic development of all students through igniting, rewarding and supporting their passions. (Photo: UCC Upic)

What are co-curricular and extra-curricular activities?

Co-curricular activities can be described as learning experiences that complement curricular learning for example entrepreneurship modules or skills sessions, whereas extra-curricular activities are activities separate from the curriculum that none-the-less develop valuable skills and attributes, for example membership of clubs, caring duties, part-time work etc. We recognise that employability is developed through both co- and extra-curricular activities. The following range of activities captures the opportunities for self-directed personal and professional development in students' campus life.

a. Career Services

UCC Career Services support students' career planning through one-to-one careers advice and coaching throughout the student journey. Career Services collaborate with academic departments and other UCC units to deliver bespoke and stand-alone employability and career-related workshops and events. Students are engaged in industry activities such as Insight Programmes and Case Competitions. Insight Programmes, ranging from one day to one week in length, are primarily designed for first-year undergraduate students to give them an insight into a business or organisation. As part of the programme,

students may engage in workshops, presentations, mentoring and team challenges. Some employers use Insight Days to scout for future talent.

Case competitions offer students the opportunity to represent their college in a national or international event against other leading colleges. Case competitions are competitive events where teams of students are invited to work with companies e.g. KPMG, Deloitte etc., to analyse a particular business challenge, provide creative ideas and solutions to that challenge, and present solutions to a panel of distinguished judges, who are often senior leaders of companies. UCC hosts one of the largest recruitment fairs in Ireland and a comprehensive range of employer-led events e.g. jobs roadshows, employer presentations and volunteering fairs.

Online job vacancy service UCC GradIreland Connect and part-time jobs portal mystudentjob.ucc.ie – a collaborative venture between UCC Students' Union, the Career Services and local businesses – both provide up-to-date job listings for students. The university is creating a new student hub building that will provide a state-of-the-art space in which the Career Services will be co-located with Student Support Services and innovative teaching and learning spaces. This demonstrates UCC's commitment to a connected services approach to student development.



Students from UCC's Fencing Club demonstrate their sport during Fresher's Week. (Photo: UCC Upic)

CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

b. Entrepreneurship

UCC's Entrepreneurship Implementation Group (EIG) was established to give coherence and co-ordination to the range of activities undertaken across the campus, and specifically to: (i) enhance connectivity and co-ordination of entrepreneurship activities across the university; (ii) encourage interdisciplinary activities; and (iii) leverage the success of individual efforts to benefit UCC, its students and the broader community.

Entrepreneurship is a key part of the university's Strategic Plan 2017-2022. Entrepreneurship education and the delivery of entrepreneurial graduates are central to our Entrepreneurship Strategy. For example, three Quercus Scholarships for innovation/entrepreneurship were awarded in 2018/19 to students registered on an undergraduate/level 8 programme.

UCC provides opportunities for all students to develop entrepreneurial and creative abilities through entrepreneurship modules and programmes – mainly delivered by the Cork University Business School – and highly specialised units including Blackstone LaunchPad, Ignite Graduate Business Innovation Programme, GatewayUCC Sprint Programme and the Office of Technology Transfer. University-wide modules e.g. New Venture Creation help students apply learning to new ventures and develop an in-depth practical understanding of

the important elements of entrepreneurship and the factors that impact on successful enterprise start-ups.

Students and staff have opportunities on campus to work on business idea generation challenges; case challenge events; annual university-wide student entrepreneurship awards; national student enterprise awards and entrepreneurship showcase events; incubator and accelerator programmes; research centre initiatives; support and information sessions and social entrepreneurship initiatives. Through these events, the university connects students with other entrepreneurs, start-ups, small businesses, local communities and funding bodies to maximise the impact of their ideas and research.

Students are active partners in the promotion of entrepreneurialism on campus. The UCC Entrepreneurial and Social Society hosts a wide range of entrepreneurial events every year, including motivational speeches from some of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs. Students at UCC have formed Enactus UCC, a local branch of Enactus, the worldwide charitable organisation that enables third-level students to create and implement social entrepreneurial projects that positively impact our local and global communities. Students are trained, guided and supported by educators and business leaders.

CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

c. UCC Clubs and Societies

Opportunities are available to students for extra-curricular learning through over 100 societies and 60 clubs and other resources such as the Glucksman Gallery, UCC Radio 98.3 FM and student publications the Motley and Express. The ability to work as part of a team, manage projects, lead others to solve problems and create new ideas are all examples of skills that UCC students develop through involvement in clubs and societies.



Members of UCC's Skills Centre team with UCC graduate Tadhg Hickey, Creative Director, CCCahoots. (UCC Upic)

d. Skills Centre

UCC's Skills Centre offers customised workshops to support students' in developing transferrable skills that are vital to securing employment. These include communication skills, writing techniques and presentation skills. The centre provides skills-building tutorials in addition to drop-in advisory sessions that allow students to personalise their learning journey. This interactive and dynamic resource supports all UCC students in building and developing skills in a confidential, non-judgemental space so that they can approach learning with confidence.

e. Peer Support

uLink Peer Support is a service that supports first-year students in UCC. All undergraduate first years meet and are linked with a peer support leader who is a current UCC student studying the same programme.

Peer Support Leaders develop the skills of leadership, teamwork, facilitation, public speaking and project management.

f. UCC Works

The UCC Works Award Programme gives recognition to students' extra-curricular activity through four pathways: Internship; Student Life (including student involvement with clubs/societies/students' union, class reps, peer mentoring etc.); Civic and Community Engagement; and Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The award is open to all students, is recorded on their Diploma Supplement and students also receive a Digital Badge (micro-credential) for their contribution to university life.

Conclusion

Employability development is central to the university's role in preparing our students to succeed both professionally and personally and to contribute meaningfully to their community and society at large. As an institution, we are committed to educating, training and retraining professionals, to supporting and contributing to the realisation of national economic and social development and to fostering a capacity for independent critical thinking among our students.

We understand also that employability represents a broad spectrum of attributes and values, some acquired through disciplinary expertise, others through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. This Employability and Employment Guide, which outlines our institutional approach to developing these attributes and values, will be further supported by discipline-specific employability statements.

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