

Building Additionality in Inclusive Co-learning

id+futures

Key Team Members

Dr Nicola Maxwell, id+futures Academic Co-Director
Dr Claire Edwards, id+futures Academic Co-Director

id+futures is funded under the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH 4)

Our Story

HEA PATH 4: Phase 2 funding enabled id+futures to develop further the opportunities for students to avail of co-learning. This was made possible by the extension of the Certificate in Social Citizenship (CSC) (NUI Special Purpose Award at Level 5 equivalent) from a one-year 30-credit Certificate programme to a two-year 40-credit Certificate programme.

A range of stakeholders were consulted about the decision to extend the Certificate in Social Citizenship (CSC) from a one-year certificate to a two-year programme. These included current students and graduates with intellectual disability (ID), id+teaching staff, Teaching Fellows, Peer Buddies, Placement Providers, parents, and key UCC departments including Access UCC and Careers Services. Feedback indicated that a two-year programme would allow time for greater consolidation of learning.

The redesign involved the revision of existing modules and the development of new modules. This included expanding the placement module from 5 to 10 credits; adding a new 5-credit "Transition In" module (SS1027), and increasing the overall credits for the programme from 30 to 40 credits.

Following a targeted recruitment campaign that included an Open Day to which Guidance Counsellors in secondary schools, Day Service providers, and people with intellectual disability and their family/supporters were invited, as well as an online webinar for Guidance Counsellors in Deis Schools, 16 students started the new two-year CSC in September 2024.

PATH 4: Phase 2 funding also enabled the continuation of the Certificate in Disability Inclusive Practice (CDIP). Four CDIP students registered for the course in 2024. This course maintains a strong focus on developing audit and advocacy skills. We are so proud that students exceeded anticipated outcomes in many cases. Their interest and engagement in the human-rights based approach to disability and how this can positively impact their life experience was evident in their ability to voice their understanding through presentations, in particular.

We are delighted that the number and diversity of co-learning modules continue to increase with 5 new modules on offer in 24/25 and 4 in 25/26 bringing the total of co-learning modules to 32. These co-learning modules cover a wide range of subject areas including Public Health, Music, English, Theatre, Management Economics, Archaeology, Engineering and Nursing. Capacity among faculty continues to be built through the engagement of three Senior Project Fellows and 8 additional Project Fellows. We celebrate our wonderful Teaching Fellows who have so willingly opened their modules to our students.

Most of all we thank our exceptional students who continue to inspire us every day. The CSC students are currently heading on work placement over the summer and we wish them every success and look forward to celebrating their graduations in the autumn.

Key Impacts

(current and envisaged)

It has been extremely encouraging to see the impact that building additionality in inclusive co-learning has had on our students, both on a personal and professional level. As well as achieving academic success, they have learned to advocate publicly, make informed decisions and choices and their expectations and ambitions have increased as their confidence and independence grew.

Co-learning and social inclusion:

Increasing from a one-year to a two-year programme meant that students could engage with a range of co-learning modules across all disciplines in UCC in both year 1 and year 2. Exposure to this range of modules allowed students more choice to engage academically with subjects they enjoyed and integrate more fully into college life.

Co-Learning: Decision-making capacity and informed choices

Choosing two subjects from an extensive list of modules meant that student decision-making capacity evolved over the course of the two years. This was bolstered by giving students the opportunity to watch videos about all the co-learning modules which helped them to make informed decisions

Co-learning: Personal Development:

The integration of our students with the wider university student cohort has had a huge impact on the university as a whole as it increased inclusive education across the campus. Our students joined clubs and societies and were active participants in all elements of college life including acting as peer buddies to first year students from all courses within UCC.

As well as presenting to their fellow students, some students took part in speaking opportunities outside of course expectations including one student who spoke at the International Association of Student Affairs & Services (IASAS) Global Summit and actively seeks out opportunities to use her voice to advocate for people with intellectual disabilities. Some of our CDIP & CSC students attended the launch of the National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030 on September 3, 2025 where they had the opportunity to discuss the impact of the strategy for people with intellectual disabilities. It has been a joy to watch our students find their voice and actively promote a more human-rights based approach to disability. Armed with the knowledge of their rights and entitlements they head out into the world as skilled advocates for people with an intellectual disability.

The id+futures team were honoured to pick up the award for Innovative Access to Third-Level Education at The Education Awards in April 2026. This award was for the organisation that had demonstrated exceptional innovation in improving access to third-level education over the last 12 months.

