

# Pathways to Employment and Education

# id+futures

## Key Team Members

Carol Veiga, Work Placement and Pathways Coordinator  
Sue Knight, Learning Support Coach  
Catherine McVicker, Creative Tutor

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## Our Story

UCC has been a pioneer in the provision of innovative third level rights-based courses for students with ID since 2009 and currently offers two programmes under the id+futures project: a two-year Certificate in Social Citizenship (CSC) and a one-year Certificate in Disability-Inclusive Practice (CDIP). The values of the id+futures project are based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), including Article 27 (inclusion in work). They also align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most particularly SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Both programmes include a 12-week paid work placement, for approximately 15 hours per week.

The ecosystem that supports the id+futures students in their preparation to undertake their placement, and their subsequent progression to either further study or a career beyond UCC, is extensive. It includes a multidisciplinary team of experts in the fields of human resources (HR), occupational therapy (OT), forum theatre practice, and social policy. In addition to multiple 1:1 sessions with the Work Placement and Employment Pathways Coordinator and Learning Support Coach (a senior occupational therapist) throughout the programme, the penultimate 12-week semester of the programmes is dedicated to a pre-placement module which explores themes and workplace skills development such as:

- Goal Setting
- CV and Cover Letters
- Professional Communication and Presentation Skills
- Progression Pathways
- Workplace Etiquette
- Working as part of a Team

All are multi-modal, student-centred and student-led by design. These sessions are centred around experiential learning, and interactive activities using universal design for learning (UDL), supporting students to recognise their strengths and hopes for the future, understand their needs, ask pertinent questions to gain clarity and encourage advocacy. In-class work is supported by weekly creative group sessions which allows a considered approach to the process with deep reflection on creating an environment where learning can percolate through direct student engagement. Using creative techniques, interactive games, role-play, visual aids, discussion, and person-centred exploration, we explore themes such as self-expression and self-awareness, identifying skills, navigating social challenges, reciprocal learning, mind-mapping, motivation and confidence, and seeking clarity through questioning.

To further enhance, accelerate and deepen the students' learning and skills acquisition, bespoke workshops are also delivered by internal UCC and external stakeholders, including: the UCC Skills Centre, UCC Career Services and Cork Education Training Board (ETB) partners. The ETB have facilitated several workshops for CSC students who are considering further education options that may allow them to develop their careers. This partnership reflects the nature of life-long learning and the growing realisation that learning routes and progression to learning and work are not necessarily linear. Progression through education and into work takes many forms and routes requiring sustained collaboration between educational sectors that speaks and plays to each other's strengths.

There is a significant focus on supporting the business partners through a multi-pronged, hands-on approach which includes: extensive consultation on compatible roles and tasks, job carving and customising tasks for individual students, pre-placement training sessions and manuals for mentors on how to support their placement student, scaffolding the induction and onboarding process, customised visual schedules to support the students to master tasks and work independently, and scheduled visits at roughly two to three week intervals. Guiding this work is the id+futures Expert Advisory Group; this is comprised of industry experts, further education colleagues and two graduates, and was set up in September 2025 to provide guidance on strategic focus and direction in developing a network and sustainable and diverse pipeline of placement opportunities. Collectively, our mission is to build a future that works for everyone.

## Key Impacts

(current and envisaged)

### Key Outputs in 2024 - 2026:

The CDIP students successfully completed their 12 week placements, two returning to undertake further study and two concentrating on career development. All 16 CSC students will commence their placements/ placement projects in Summer 2026.

14 Career-Readiness Workshops and Business Partner Site Visits took place in 2025-2026.

4 students have applied for specialised further education courses in September 2026.

The number of business partnerships increased to 30+ and we had 80+ attendees at our inaugural Business Partner Showcase held on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2025.

The id+futures Expert Advisory Group was established in September 2025 to provide strategic guidance and support for expanding the business partner network.

8 Easy Read Guides to support pathways were developed by Ruby Walsh and Carol Veiga, and co-created with four id+ graduates. These include: Workplace Words, Workplace Etiquette, Understanding Pay and Tax, and Making an Application for an ETB Course, and can be accessed through the id+ website.

The CSC students took part in the UCC EmployAgility Awards, a UCC Career Services professional skills development programme.

### Dissemination and Awareness Building:

The id+futures LinkedIn corporate page has grown to almost 1,700 followers in 12 months.

CDIP Graduate, Alex Moloney, was successfully cast for an RTÉ series which will feature 6 people in Ireland who have a disability and their career journeys - this will air later in 2026.

In March 2026, Carol Veiga presented on the id+ placements and partnerships at Intreo's "Strengthen your Business - Strive for Inclusion" employer event, with 120+ industry attendees.

CSC and CDIP graduate and co-researcher, Claire McCarthy, will be a panelist at Mr Price's second edition of Light the Way, a high-profile inclusive employment event in June 2026.

The id+futures team contributed articles to the 2026 Education Matters/Education Yearbook including one on readiness for transitioning to work and education beyond university for students with students with an intellectual disability (ID) at UCC.

### Testimonials:

*"By the end of her placement, we genuinely couldn't imagine The Kingsley without Deirdre. So, we offered her a job, and she has absolutely thrived in the time since. She's kind, warm, and funny, and has a brilliant sense of who everyone is and how to connect with them."*  
(Fergal Harte, Group General Manager, Fota Island Collection)

*"Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that everyone has the right to work, to good working conditions and to fair pay. Human rights are not just ideas, but we should feel that they are real in our everyday lives. For people with intellectual disabilities there is often a gap between the ideas of human rights and our daily lives."*



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